魁!!クロマティ高校 風雲編 9
野中英次
講談社
VALIANTLY FORGING AHEAD!
CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL 9
"A TALE OF THINGS
TO COME."
EIJI NONAKA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 CHAPTER 188 **ONLY ME**

11 CHAPTER 189 **EXPLOSIVE MOUSE**

19 CHAPTER 190 **IT TAKES A LOT TO LAUGH**

25 CHAPTER 191 **LOVE'S MEMORIES**

31 CHAPTER 192 **DAY TRIPPER**

43 CHAPTER 193 **BAD COMPANY**

55 CHAPTER 194 **SOLID STATE SURVIVOR**

67 CHAPTER 195 **IN ANOTHER LAND**

79 CHAPTER 196 **DEAR FRIEND**

93 CHAPTER 197 **CRUSH ON YOU**

105 CHAPTER 198 **WON'T BE LONG**

117 CHAPTER 199 **DON'T LET ME DOWN**

123 CHAPTER 200 **CAN'T GET ANYTHING**

131 CHAPTER 201 **ALL TOGETHER NOW**

139 CHAPTER 202 **IT'S ALL TOO MUCH**

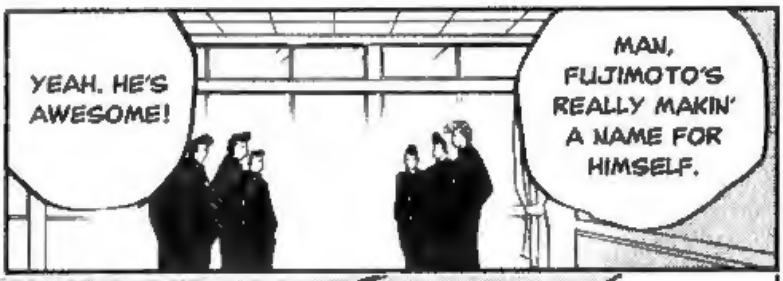
143 CHAPTER 203 **AN INNOCENT MAN**

155 CHAPTER 204 **JEALOUSY**

CHAPTER 188: **ONLY ME**

OH, YEAH? WHAT DID YOU DO?
HEY, LISTEN TO THIS. THE OTHER DAY, SOME ASSHOLES FROM BASS CAME UP TO ME LOOKIN' FOR A FIGHT.
THE THUGS OF MANUEL HIGH

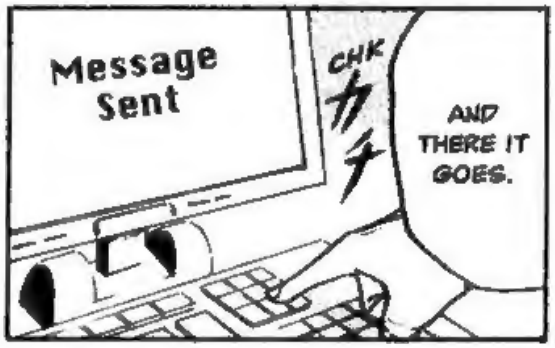
THE SECOND I SAY THAT, THEY GET ALL SCARED AND BACK DOWN! THEY WERE NOTHIN' SPECIAL AFTER ALL.
WELL, IT WAS JUST ONE OF ME AND THREE OF THEM. THINGS WEREN'T LOOKIN' TOO GOOD, SO I FIGURED I'D USE FUJIMOTO'S NAME. "THERE'S A GUY NAMED FUJIMOTO AT MY SCHOOL," I SAID.



IF ANY OF YOU DIPSHITS HAVE A PROBLEM, YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE OF IT ON YOUR OWN!
IT WAS YOUR FIGHT, SO USE YOUR OWN DAMN NAME!
YEAH, BUT HE'S RIGHT. YOU'VE GOTTA WORK IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF.
HE SURE DOESN'T PULL ANY PUNCHES.
ULP
YOU KEEP PULLIN' STUNTS LIKE THAT, YOU'LL NEVER MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF. BITCH!
RATTLE
CHK
CHK
"DEAR SATORIN. IT'S BEEN A WHILE."
CHK
CHK

"ACTUALLY, I'M WRITING BECAUSE THERE'S A MANGA I'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND TO YOU. BY CHANCE, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF DYNAMIC JIRO? HE'S AN ARTIST WHO DOES A ROBOT MANGA THAT RUNS IN A CERTAIN CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE."
CHK
CHK
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
JIRO
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
DYNAMIC JIRO
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
DYNAMIC
"THIS ISN'T A LAUGH-OUT-LOUD SORT OF MANGA. IT'S MORE OF A SUBTLY-TICKLES-YOUR-FUNNY-BONE MANGA, THE KIND OF HUMOR WHERE, EVEN IF IT'S NOT SO FUNNY WHEN YOU'RE READING IT, YOU CAN FIND YOURSELF SMILING IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT LATER ON. HMM. THIS 'EXPLANATION' SORT OF MAKES THINGS MORE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND (LOL). I KNOW YOU DON'T READ MANGA, BUT I DEFINITELY RECOMMEND GIVING THIS ONE A TRY. WELL, SEE YOU LATER."

BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT I HAVE TO DO TODAY.
WELL, I FINISHED MY E-MAIL TO SATORIN.


Message Sent
CHK
AND THERE IT GOES.

Dynamic Jiro Fansite
THE DYNAMIC FORUM
FIRST, IT'S TIME TO DO A LITTLE ADMINNING ON THE FORUM I SET UP THREE DAYS AGO.

Threads: 0
Posts: 0
WHEN NO ONE'S MADE A SINGLE POST.
HM. THAT'S GONNA BE A LITTLE HARD...
IT TOOK A LOT OF WORK TO MAKE THIS SITE-- IF I DON'T TRY TO GET AS MANY VISITORS AS I CAN, THEN WHAT'S THE POINT?!
BUT I CAN'T JUST SIT BACK AND DO NOTHING. C'MON, THINK!
WELL, I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED. THE FORUM'S ONLY BEEN UP FOR THREE DAYS.
Japan's Largest Forum! The No. 1 Message Board!
FINE. I'LL TRY GETTING A LITTLE TRAFFIC FROM HERE.
JAPAN'S LARGEST FORUM, HUH?
I'M NOT TOO BIG ON DOIN' STUFF LIKE THIS, BUT I NEED TO GET THE WORD OUT.
CHK
"THIS MAY SOUND KIND OF LIKE SPAM (LOL), BUT IF ANY OF YOU GET THE CHANCE, YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY GIVE HIM A READ!"
"HI! DO ANY OF YOU OUT THERE KNOW DYNAMIC JIRO? I'VE GOTTA SAY, I'M A PRETTY BIG FAN OF HIS WORK."
CHK
CHK

I'VE PROBABLY GOTTEN AROUND 20 REPLIES BY NOW. I MEAN, THIS IS JAPAN'S LARGEST FORUM.
WELL, WHAT SORT OF RESPONSE DID I GET?
FIVE HOURS LATER
CHK カチ
THAT SHOULD DO IT.

THE LARGEST FORUM IN JAPAN... AND I HAVEN'T GOTTEN A SINGLE RESPONSE.
Replies: 0

I HATE TO DO IT, BUT I'M GONNA HAVE TO REPLY TO MY OWN POST. STILL, IF I DO IT RIGHT, NO ONE WILL KNOW IT'S ME.
I'LL HAVE TO KICK THINGS UP A NOTCH.
THIS IS GONNA BE TOUGH. IT LOOKS LIKE DYNAMIC JIRO'S EVEN MORE UNPOPULAR THAN I THOUGHT.

"STILL, I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO READ HIS MANGA! I'M SO HAPPY TO HAVE FOUND ANOTHER FAN! YAAY!"
カチ CHK
カチ CHK
"HI! YES, I KNOW DYNAMIC JIRO! HIS STUFF HASN'T MADE MUCH OF AN IMPACT YET, BUT I THINK IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE MAKES A NAME FOR HIMSELF."

MAN, I FEEL TERRIBLE.
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE POSED AS SOMEONE ELSE ONLINE.

I GUESS IT'S THE SAME IN EVERY INDUSTRY.
LIKE, EVEN WHEN A MANGA'S NOT SELLING, THEY'LL RUN ADS CALLIN' IT A HIT.
IN THIS DAY AND AGE, PEOPLE WILL USE ALL KINDS OF TRICKS IN ORDER TO MAKE IT. IT'S PRACTICALLY A GIVEN!
STILL, THAT'S WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO. I REALLY THINK DYNAMIC JIRO HAS TALENT--BUT HAVIN' TALENT IS NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS!

Threads: 0
Posts: 0
WELL, LET'S SEE HOW THINGS ARE GOIN' ON THE FORUM.
ONE WEEK LATER
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S A CRIME. IT'S ALL ABOUT MAKIN' A NAME FOR YOURSELF, AND I'M JUST DOING WHAT I CAN TO HELP OUT. NOTHIN' WRONG WITH THAT.

I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT...
IN A WAY, IT'S SORT OF INCREDIBLE THAT SOMEONE COULD BE SO UNPOPULAR. YOU'VE GOTTA HAND IT TO THE GUY.
THIS IS REALLY NOT GOOD.

I'M OUT OF OPTIONS.
THIS FORUM IS SO UNPOPULAR, IT'S LIKE IT'S TELLIN' ME I DON'T EVEN EXIST!
amic Jiro Fans
YNAMIC FO
I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL PRETTY EMBARRASSED I EVER MADE THIS THING.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M RUNNIN' AWAY. I JUST NEED A LITTLE TIME OFF TO RECHARGE. I MEAN, I'M DOIN' THIS SINGLE-HANDED! BUT THERE'S NOTHIN' MORE I CAN DO. I'LL HAVE TO PUT THE FORUM ON HOLD TILL I CAN SCARE UP SOME MORE DYNAMIC JIRO FANS.
This forum is closed until further notice.
I'M GONNA HAVE TO SHUT IT DOWN.
NO! THE MAN'S JUST TOO UNPOPULAR! I'VE DONE EVERYTHIN' I CAN, AND THOSE ARE THE FACTS. I CAN'T DO THIS ALL BY MYSELF! ALRIGHT, I'M SHUTTIN' IT DOWN.
STILL, THAT DOES KINDA SOUND LIKE I'M RUNNIN' AWAY...
DUDE, YOU DID THAT?
I THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT FUJIMOTO SAID, AND I WENT OVER TO BASS AND KICKED THEIR ASSES ALL BY MYSELF! HE WAS RIGHT--YOU CAN'T GO AROUND EXPECTIN' SOMEONE TO DO YOUR WORK FOR YOU. YOU GOTTA TAKE 'EM ON USING YOUR OWN NAME, AND NOT RELY ON SOMEBODY ELSE'S.
HUH? DID WHAT?
HEY, I DID IT.

WE BOTH GOT OUR ASSES KICKED. SO THERE WAS NO REAL WINNER. BUT I FEEL SATISFIED.
I'M GLAD I DID IT ON MY OWN!
WE CAN MAKE IT ON OUR OWN! CAN'T WE, FUJIMOTO?
I DID JUST LIKE FUJIMOTO SAID--I TOOK 'EM ON IN MY OWN NAME, AND I DID IT ALL ALONE!
CRACK!
DOIN' IT ON YOUR OWN IS IMPOSSIBLE!
HE CHANGED HIS MIND AGAIN.
....

CAN YOU BELIEVE THEY MADE THIS INTO AN ANIME?

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

WINNER OF THE Kodansha Manga Award

"You can't help but laugh out loud at half-baked people in a half-baked world, functioning with the conviction that what they do is right, smart or tough."

— *Ain't It Cool News*

PC problems are plaguing the temperamental leader of Manuel High School, sending his gang of thugs into a tizzy. Meanwhile the leader of Destrade High finds himself flummoxed by a gag manga he just doesn't find funny. But that's nothing compared to the commotion back at Cromartie! (Note to Masked Takenouchi: Do NOT bump into Hayashida while he's eating...)

ADV MANGA
www.adv-manga.com

Graphic Novel/
Manga/Comedy
USA $10.95
MCM/009

13+

ISBN 4 8 4089 0357 2
9 781413 903577

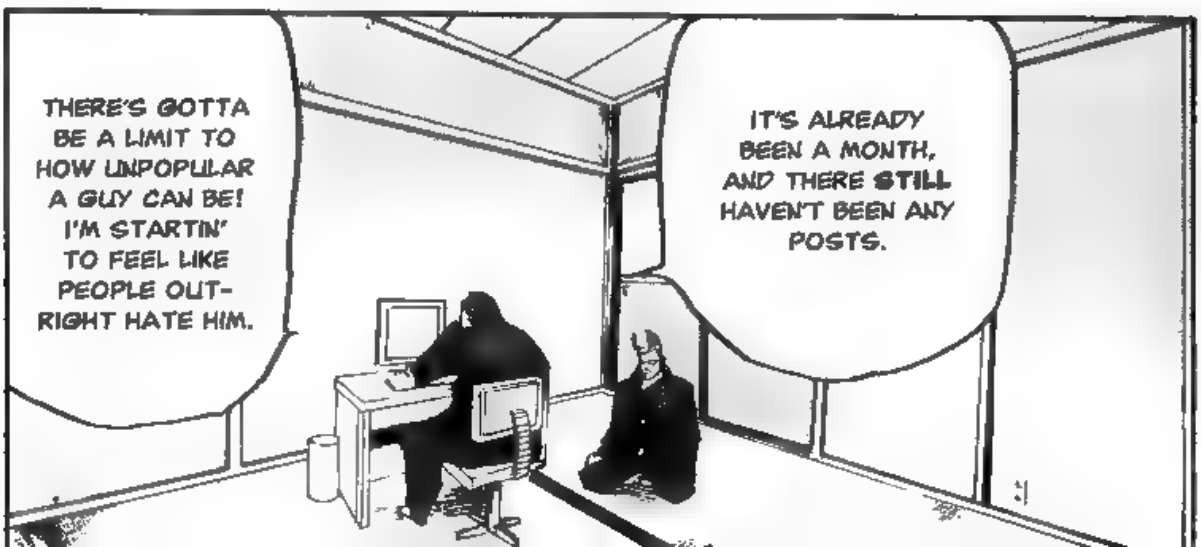
CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

VOL.9

CHAPTER 189: **EXPLOSIVE MOUSE**

THE DYNAMIC FORUM

Threads: 0
Posts: 0


THERE'S GOTTA BE A LIMIT TO HOW UNPOPULAR A GUY CAN BE! I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL LIKE PEOPLE OUT-RIGHT HATE HIM.
IT'S ALREADY BEEN A MONTH, AND THERE STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ANY POSTS.

NOT A SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD IS PAYING ATTENTION TO THIS MANGA.
THE INTERNET SENDS OUT INFORMATION ACROSS THE ENTIRE WORLD. SO THAT MEANS...
. . . . . .
IT'S GOT ME THINKIN' THAT MAYBE I'M SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR IT BEING SO UNPOPULAR.
WHY SHOULD I FEEL RESPONSIBLE? DAMMIT! THIS AUTHOR'S STARTIN' TO PISS ME OFF!
NO, THAT'S NOT IT! I'VE GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH IT!
IS THIS MANGA EVEN ANY GOOD?
I JUST THOUGHT OF SOME-THING.

MAYBE I SHOULD DOUBLE-CHECK.
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
YOU'RE STILL HERE?!
HUH?!
YEAH, THAT'S FUNNY.
HMPH.
STILL, HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO STIR UP ANY ACTIVITY ON MY FORUM?
SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE CRITICIZED THIS THING THAT I'D STARTED TO THINK I WAS NUTS FOR THINKIN' IT WAS FUNNY. BUT I CAN'T START SECOND-GUESSING MYSELF. I'VE GOTTA BE STRONG AND KEEP ROOTIN' FOR DYNAMIC JIRO.

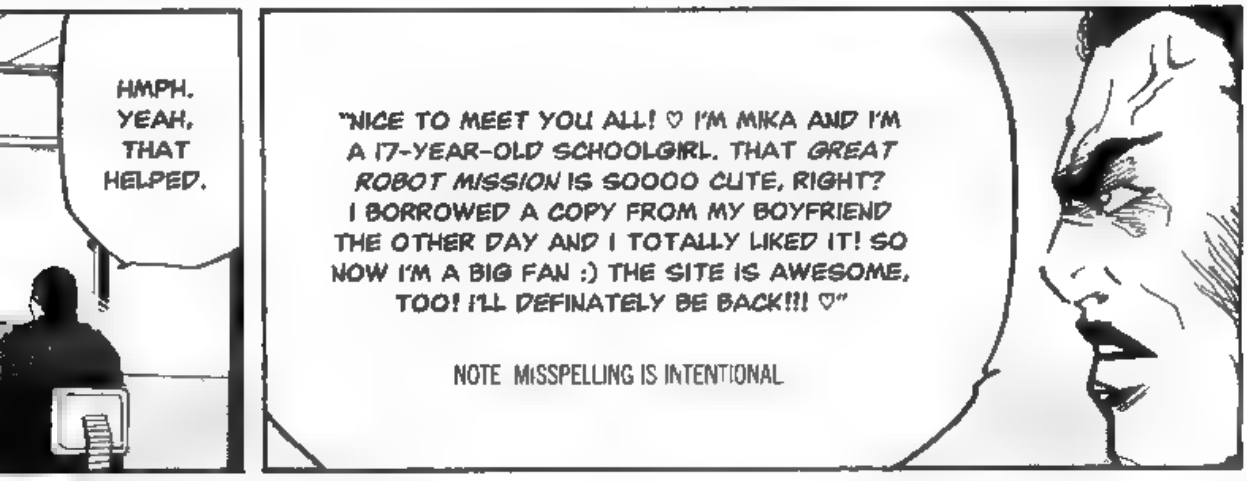
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. I'LL JUST HAVE TO WRITE THE POSTS MYSELF.
. . . . . .

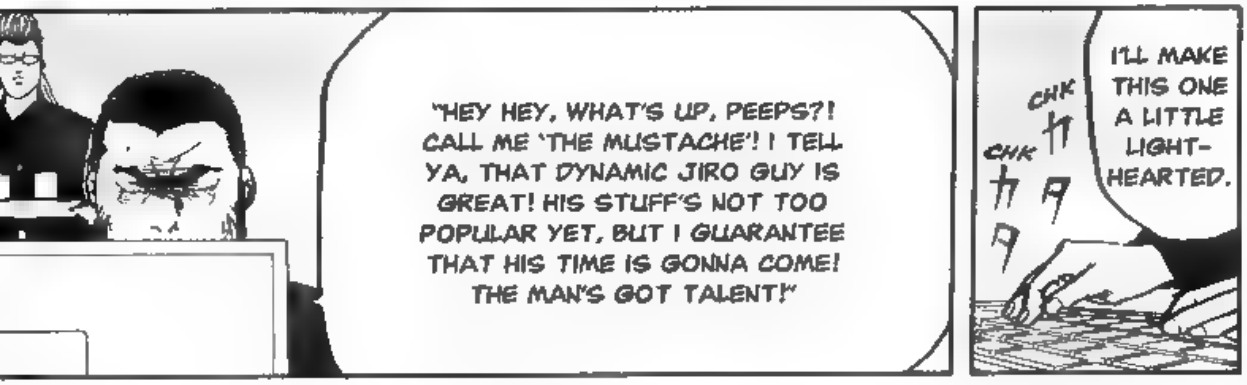
カチカチ
カチカチ
IF I DO THIS, IT'LL GIVE THE FORUM THE JUMP-START IT NEEDS AND THINGS WILL FINALLY START PICKIN' UP. AT LEAST, THAT'S HOW I CAN TRY TO JUSTIFY IT TO MYSELF.
I'VE ALREADY POSED AS SOMEONE ELSE-- IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE HOW MANY TIMES I DO IT NOW.

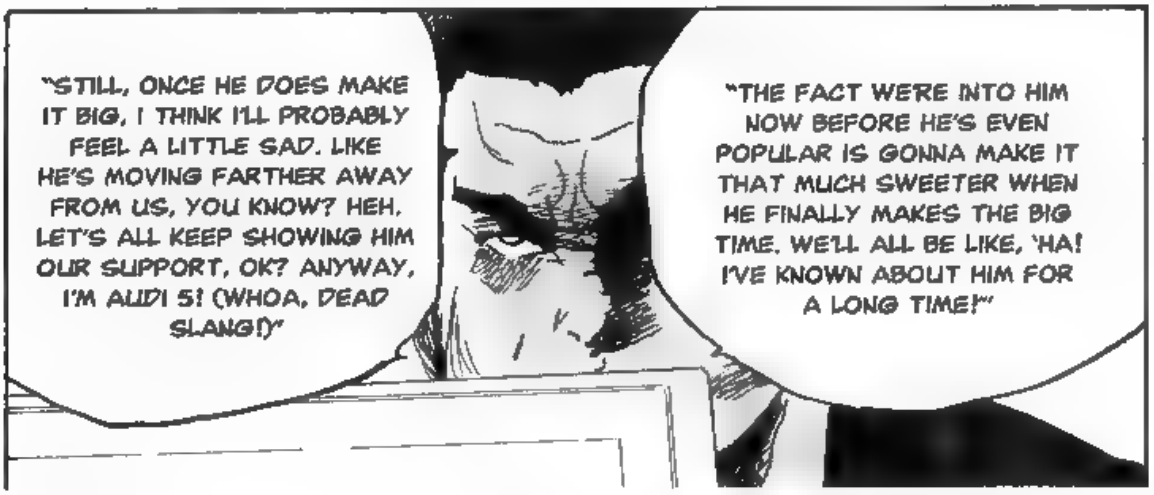
"I'M GONNA DO MY BEST TO SUPPORT JIRO AND HIS WORK! ANYWAY, SORRY FOR CARRYING ON LIKE THIS. I'LL PROBABLY POP IN LATER TONIGHT. THANKS!"
カチカチ
"DEAR ADMIN. NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M HONYARA, AND I'M ALSO A FAN OF JIRO'S WORK. I SURE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THIS WEBSITE. I WISH I'D KNOWN ABOUT IT SOONER! (LOL)"

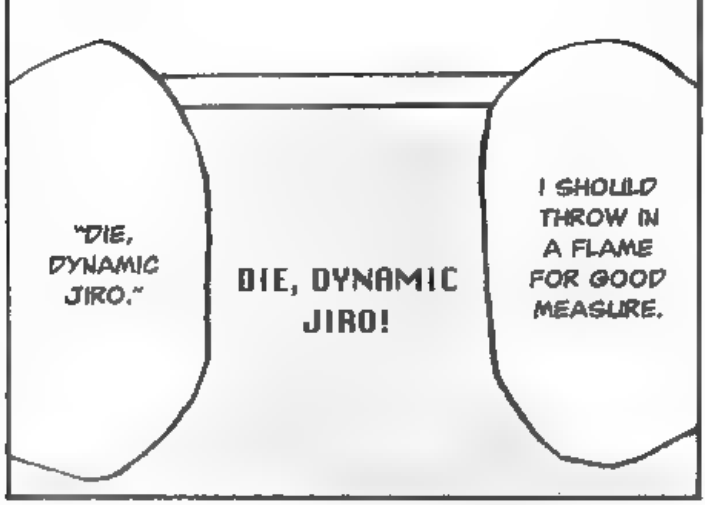
HOW EMBARRASSING.

CHK
CHK
SOME COMEDIAN A LONG TIME AGO SAID, "IF YOU TRY DOIN' AN ACT WHEN YOU'RE EMBARRASSED, YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET ANY LAUGHS." IT'S THE SAME WITH ME NOW. I'VE GOTTA CLEAR MY HEAD OF THIS STUFF AND JUST DO IT!
I CAN'T LET SOMETHIN' LIKE THIS GET ME DOWN.


HMPH. YEAH, THAT HELPED.
"NICE TO MEET YOU ALL! ♡ I'M MIKA AND I'M A 17-YEAR-OLD SCHOOLGIRL. THAT *GREAT ROBOT MISSION* IS SOOOO CUTE, RIGHT? I BORROWED A COPY FROM MY BOYFRIEND THE OTHER DAY AND I TOTALLY LIKED IT! SO NOW I'M A BIG FAN :) THE SITE IS AWESOME, TOO! I'LL DEFINATELY BE BACK!!! ♡"
NOTE MISSPELLING IS INTENTIONAL


"HEY HEY, WHAT'S UP, PEEPS?! CALL ME 'THE MUSTACHE'! I TELL YA, THAT DYNAMIC JIRO GUY IS GREAT! HIS STUFF'S NOT TOO POPULAR YET, BUT I GUARANTEE THAT HIS TIME IS GONNA COME! THE MAN'S GOT TALENT!"
CHK
CHK
I'LL MAKE THIS ONE A LITTLE LIGHT-HEARTED.


"STILL, ONCE HE DOES MAKE IT BIG, I THINK I'LL PROBABLY FEEL A LITTLE SAD. LIKE HE'S MOVING FARTHER AWAY FROM US, YOU KNOW? HEH. LET'S ALL KEEP SHOWING HIM OUR SUPPORT, OK? ANYWAY, I'M AUDI 5! (WHOA, DEAD SLANG!)"
"THE FACT WE'RE INTO HIM NOW BEFORE HE'S EVEN POPULAR IS GONNA MAKE IT THAT MUCH SWEETER WHEN HE FINALLY MAKES THE BIG TIME. WE'LL ALL BE LIKE, 'HA! I'VE KNOWN ABOUT HIM FOR A LONG TIME!'"


"DIE, DYNAMIC JIRO."
DIE, DYNAMIC JIRO!
I SHOULD THROW IN A FLAME FOR GOOD MEASURE.

STILL, IT'LL LOOK KIND OF FAKE IF PEOPLE POST NOTHING BUT GOOD THINGS.
YEAH, THIS IS STARTIN' TO MAKE THINGS MORE LIVELY.

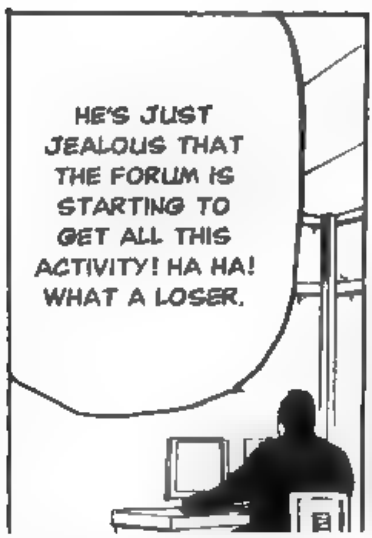
HM?

ALRIGHT, A POST!
ONE WEEK LATER

THAT LOOKS GOOD. LET'S SEE HOW THINGS GO.

WH-WHAT?! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HOW DID HE FIND OUT?

Username: Passerby
Hey, admin! You're just typing this stuff yourself! How obvious can you get?! LOLOLOL!!!!11
NOTE INTENTIONAL


HE'S JUST JEALOUS THAT THE FORUM IS STARTING TO GET ALL THIS ACTIVITY! HA HA! WHAT A LOSER.

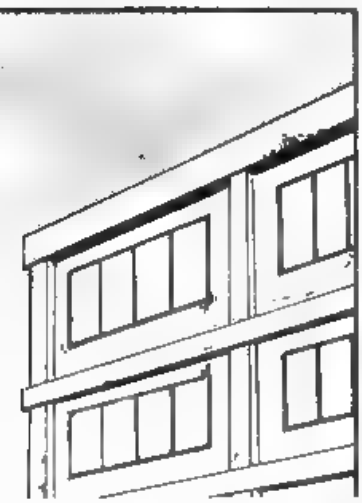
AH. THAT MUST BE IT.

NO... THERE'S NO WAY SOME AMATEUR COULD HACK HIS WAY THROUGH ALL THIS SECURITY.
DON'T TELL ME HE TRACED MY I.P. ADDRESS!

Take a look at posts 7 and 8. The names are the same! Ha!

7. Username: Admin
There've been a lot of new posts recently. That makes me happy!!

8. Username: Admin
Hi there, admin! It's sooo nice to meet you!



HA! YEAH, THERE'S A BUNCH OF PISSANTS OUT THERE WHO TRY TO PASS THEMSELVES OFF AS YAKUZA. LIKE, "DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKIN' TO?!"
YESTERDAY, SOME FOOL TRIED PICKIN' A FIGHT WITH ME. HE WAS ALL, "YOU WANNA TAKE THIS UP WITH MY CREW?!"
WHAT IS IT?
HEY, CHECK THIS OUT.

GETTIN' YOUR REAL IDENTITY BUSTED LIKE THAT HAS GOTTA BE THE GREATEST SHAME THERE IS! YOU'D BE SO EMBARRASSED YOU'D JUST WANNA DIE!
THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WHEN YOU FOUND OUT MUST'VE BEEN PRICELESS! MAN, I GOT TEARS IN MY EYES!
AN OFFICE DUDE WAS TRYIN' TO ACT LIKE A YAKUZA? HA!
SO I TAKE THE IDIOT 'ROUND BACK AND START PUTTIN' THE HURT ON HIM. TURNS OUT HE'S JUST SOME OFFICE WORKER!

HE MUST BE *REALLY* EMBARRASSED.

CHAPTER 190: **IT TAKES A LOT TO LAUGH**

THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
DYNAMIC JIRO
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
DYNAMIC JIRO
KONDO CAFÉ
HMM
AH! ROBOT!
I GOT IT.
OH.
I SEE.
SO THIS IS ONE OF THOSE "GAG MANGA" THAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT, EH?
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
NOBURU YAMAGUCHI
LEADER OF DESTRADE'S 1ST YEAR
I READ THIS IN THE NAME OF **STUDY**. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GAG HUMOR. IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL.
IT'S AMUSING ENOUGH, BUT YOU WOULDN'T CATCH ME GOING OUT AND BUYING ONE.

I MEAN, MANGA HUMOR IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT ANIMAL FROM STAGE HUMOR.
IF YOU TRIED DOING THIS MANGA-STYLE HUMOR IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE, THERE'S NO WAY YOU'D GET ANY LAUGHS. IT'S REAL LIVE LAUGHTER THAT I'M AFTER.

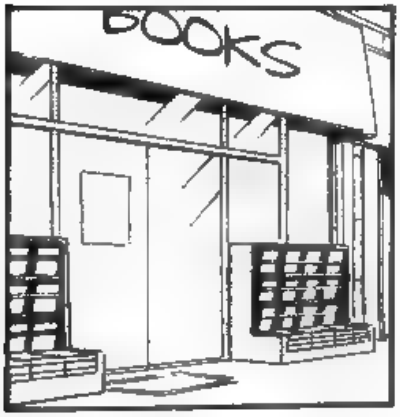
ACTUALLY, WHAT'S THE POINT OF EVEN TRYIN' TO HAVE A MANGA MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH?
WHEN PEOPLE READ A MANGA, THEY WANNA BE MOVED OR EXCITED!

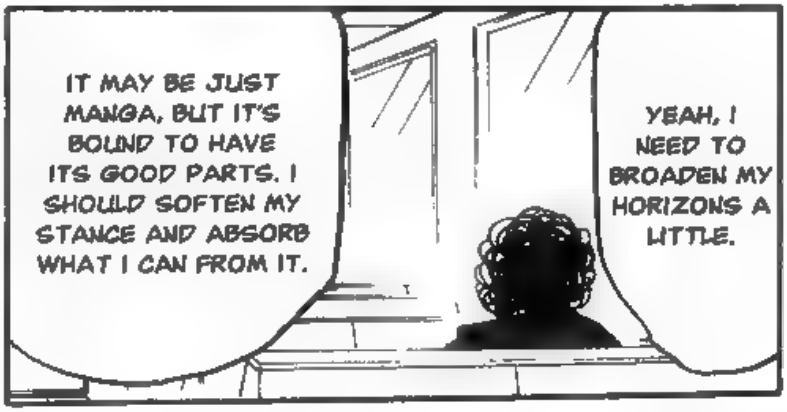
STILL, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO'LL LET OUT A LITTLE "HEH!" WHEN THEY'RE READING A MANGA IN THE CONVENIENCE STORE.
BUT IS IT REALLY THAT FUNNY?

NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT...
NOBODY'S GONNA READ A MANGA BECAUSE THEY WANT A GOOD LAUGH.

WELL, THAT GUY'S AN EXCEPTION. HE'S AN IDIOT.
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
BWAHAHA! THIS MANGA IS FRIGGIN HILARIOUS!

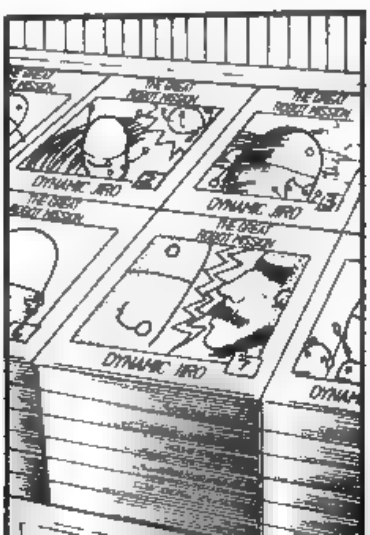
YOUR BASIC IDIOT HAS NO COMIC SENSIBILITIES--IF YOU CAN MAKE **THEM** LAUGH, YOU'VE ATTAINED THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SKILL. ANYONE WHO SAYS, "THEY'RE MORONS, SO THEY'LL NEVER GET IT" IS ON THE WAY TO BECOMING ONE SELF-ABSORBED ENTERTAINER.
WAIT A MINUTE. I CAN'T JUST WRITE PEOPLE OFF AS IDIOTS AND LEAVE IT AT THAT.


BOOKS


IT MAY BE JUST MANGA, BUT IT'S BOUND TO HAVE ITS GOOD PARTS. I SHOULD SOFTEN MY STANCE AND ABSORB WHAT I CAN FROM IT.
YEAH, I NEED TO BROADEN MY HORIZONS A LITTLE.

WELL, IS ANYONE HERE READING THIS PARTICULAR COMIC?

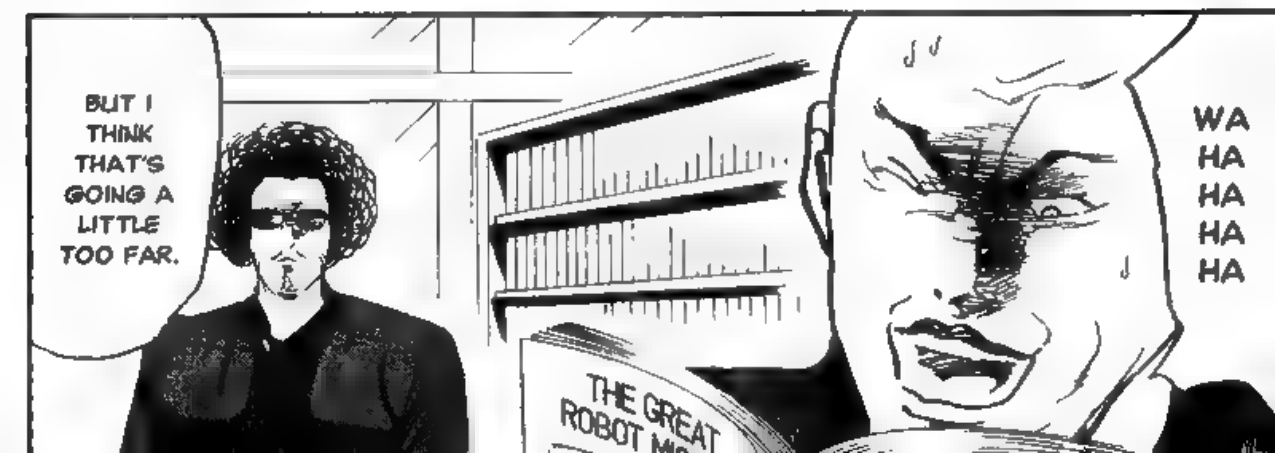
DOES THAT MEAN THEY'RE BIG SELLERS? OR ARE THEY JUST SITTING THERE BECAUSE NO ONE'S BUYING THEM?
THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF THEM.


THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
DYNAMIC JIRO

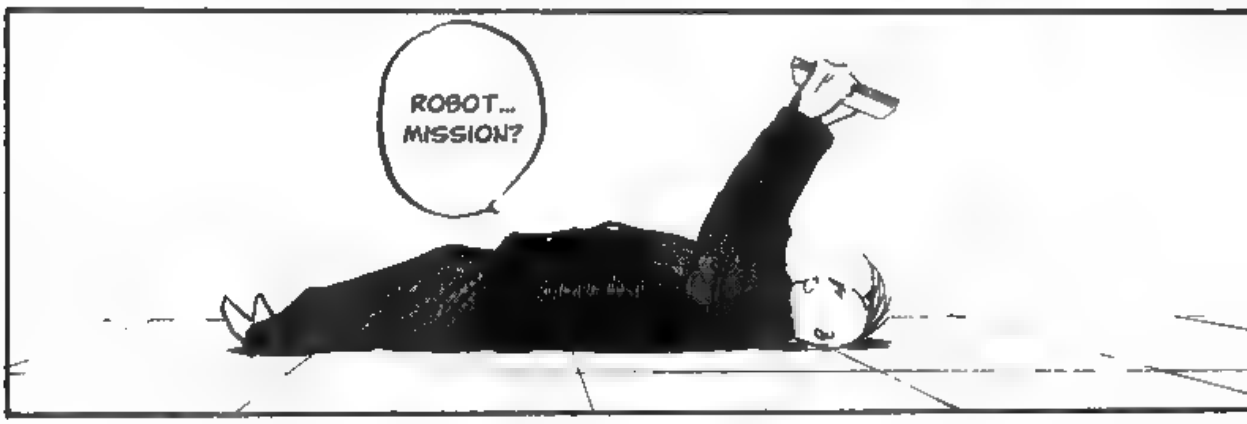
BINGO.
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
KC
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION
THE GREAT ROBOT MISSION

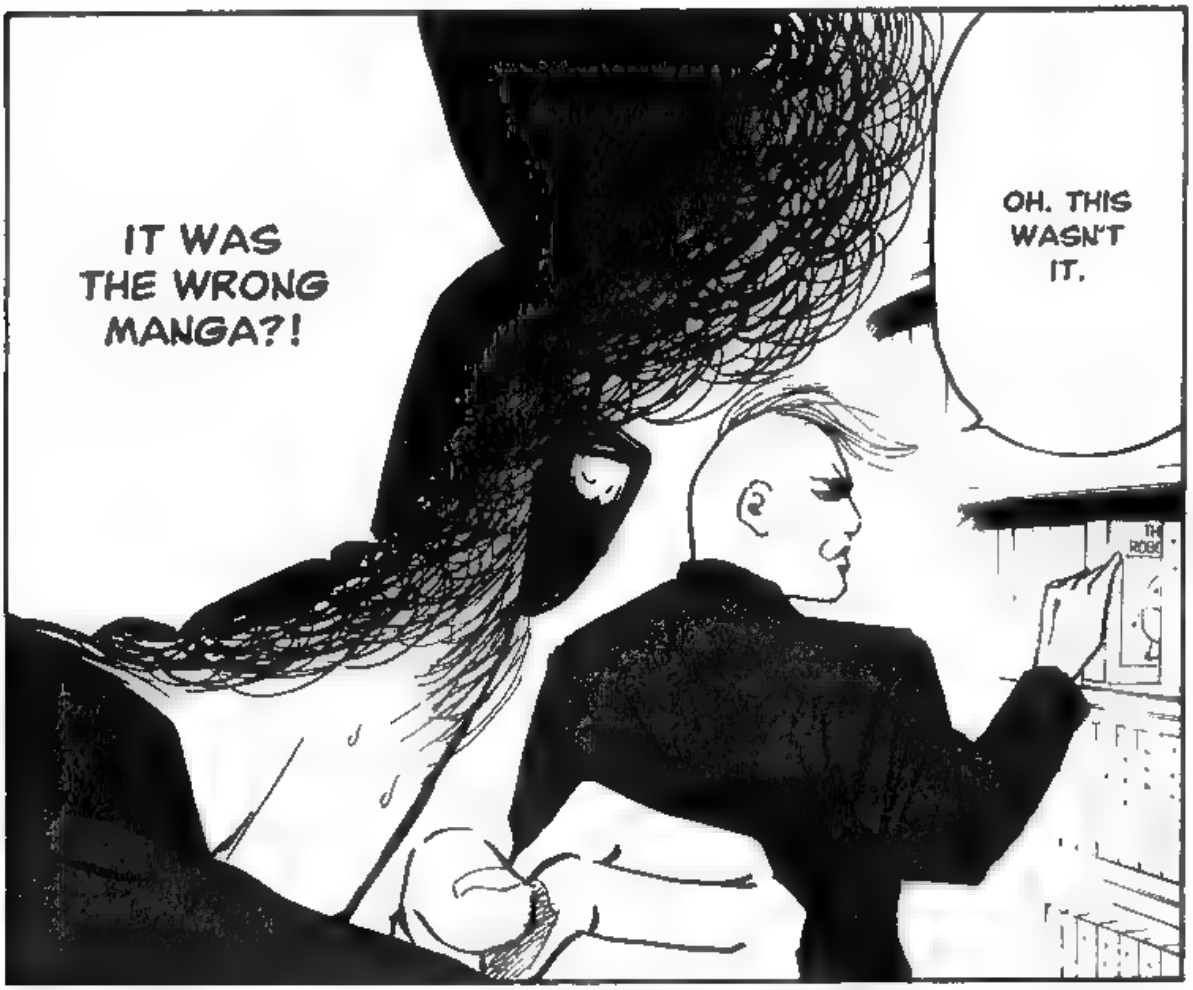
I CAN UNDERSTAND SOMEONE LETTING OUT A LAUGH OR TWO IF SOMETHING'S FUNNY...

HE'S LAUGHING. AND HE'S NO KID, EITHER. ANY MANGA THAT CAN MAKE AN ADULT LAUGH MUST HAVE SOMETHING GOING FOR IT.
HEH HEH


BUT I THINK THAT'S GOING A LITTLE TOO FAR.
WA HA HA HA HA
THE GREAT ROBOT

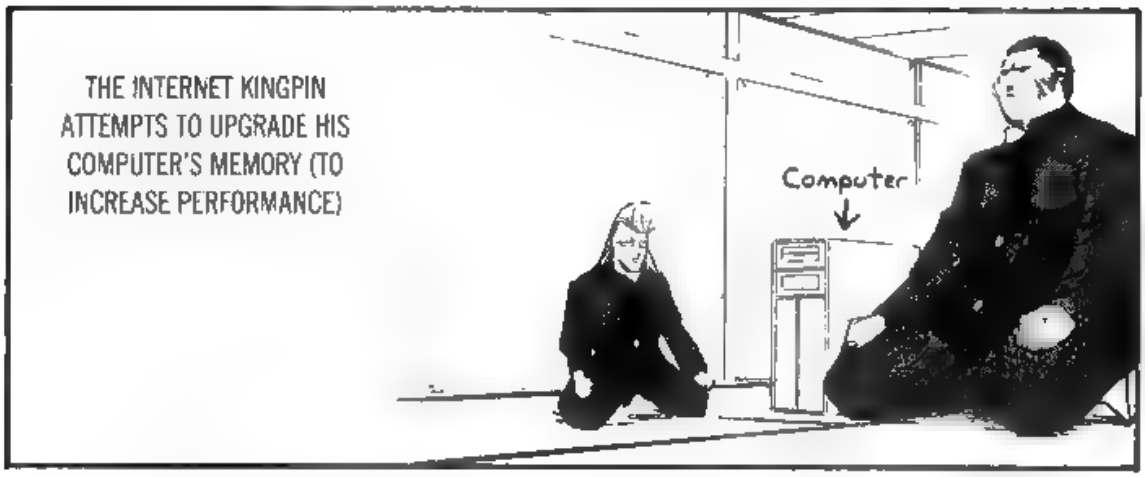
WHICH PAGE IS HE LAUGHING AT?
HOW-EVER...
YES, THIS SCENE PLAYS OUT PAR-TICULARLY WELL. EVEN I COULD LEARN SOMETHING FROM IT.
AAH. THE ROBOT INVASION, EH?
HEH HEH
THIS SORT OF REACTION IS PRETTY ABNORMAL. AND I GET THE FEELING HE'S JUST HOLDING THE MANGA AND NOT READING IT.
GWA HA HA
HAA
HEE
HAA
HEE
WA HA HA
My stomach hurts!
THIS IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT GENRE FROM MY BRAND OF COMEDY, BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT IT'S NOT BAD.
ANYWAY, IF A GAG MANGA CAN MAKE SOMEONE LAUGH THIS MUCH, THAT'S SAYING SOMETHING.
GREAT

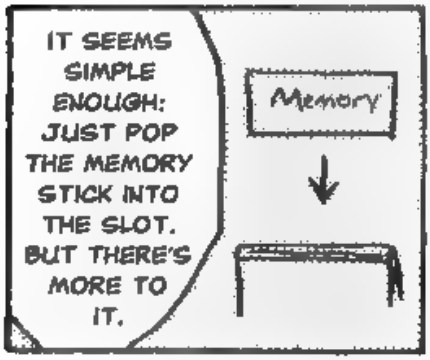


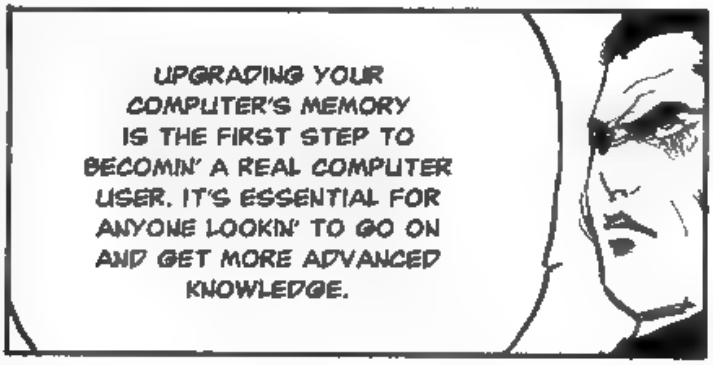


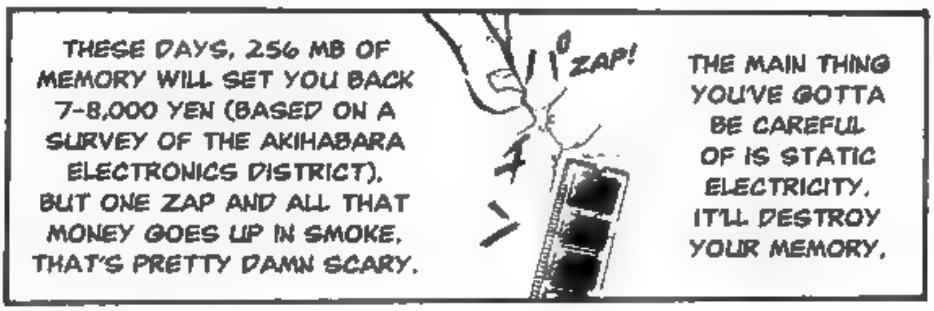
THERE REALLY ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO'LL LAUGH IF SOMETHING *SEEMS* FUNNY.

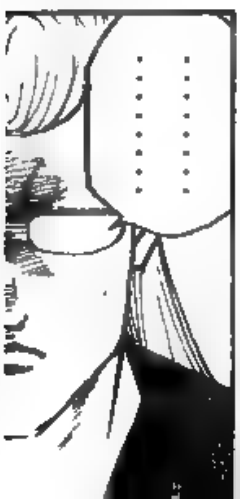
CHAPTER 191: **LOVE'S MEMORIES**

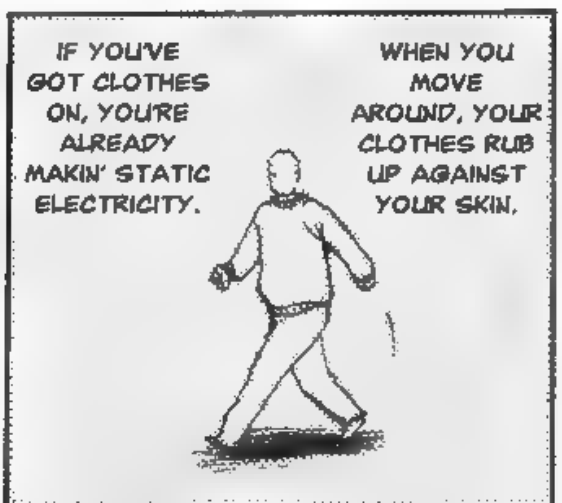


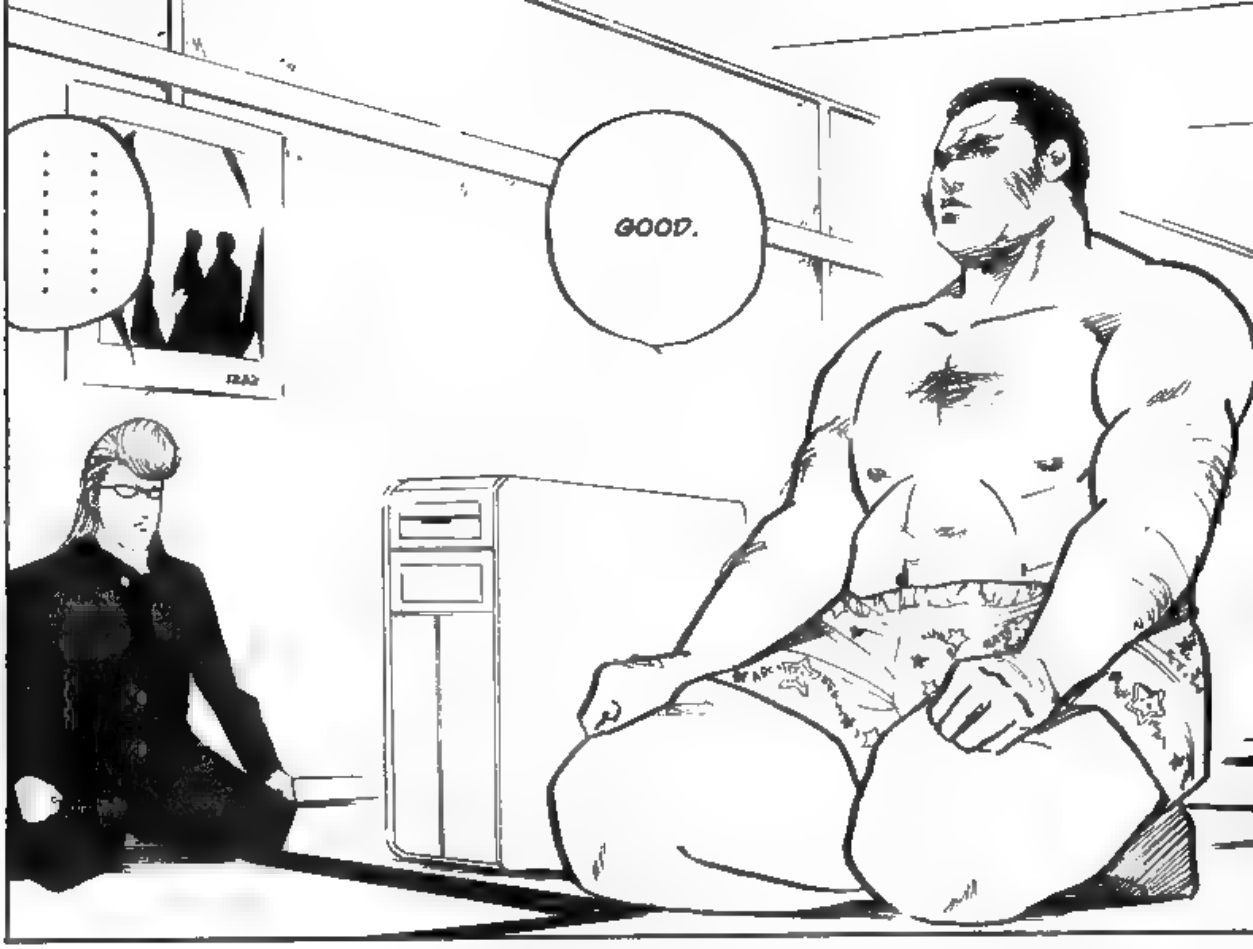



UPGRADING YOUR COMPUTER'S MEMORY IS THE FIRST STEP TO BECOMIN' A REAL COMPUTER USER. IT'S ESSENTIAL FOR ANYONE LOOKIN' TO GO ON AND GET MORE ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE.


THESE DAYS, 256 MB OF MEMORY WILL SET YOU BACK 7-8,000 YEN (BASED ON A SURVEY OF THE AKIHABARA ELECTRONICS DISTRICT). BUT ONE ZAP AND ALL THAT MONEY GOES UP IN SMOKE. THAT'S PRETTY DAMN SCARY.
ZAP!
THE MAIN THING YOU'VE GOTTA BE CAREFUL OF IS STATIC ELECTRICITY. IT'LL DESTROY YOUR MEMORY.

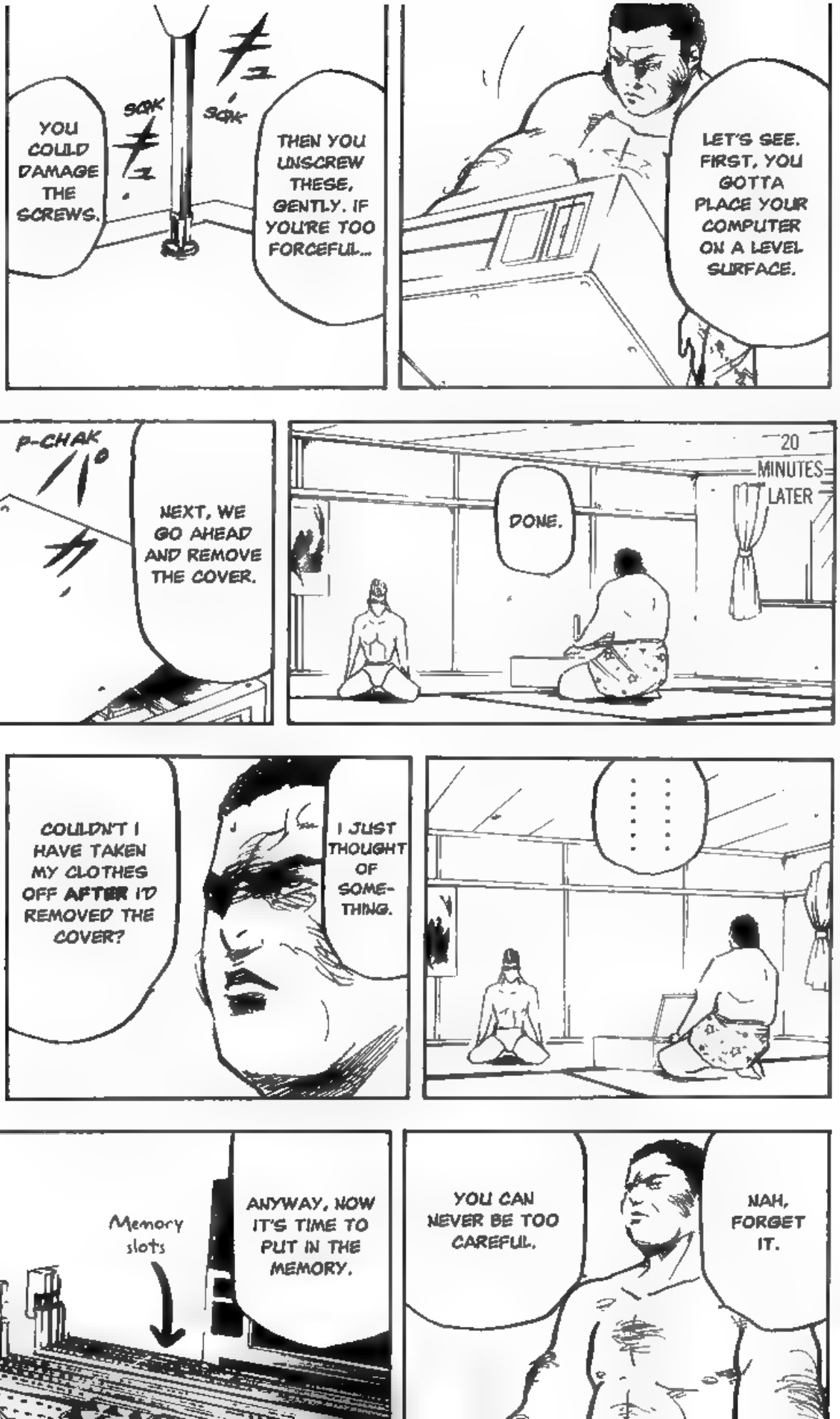



IF YOU'VE GOT CLOTHES ON, YOU'RE ALREADY MAKIN' STATIC ELECTRICITY.
WHEN YOU MOVE AROUND, YOUR CLOTHES RUB UP AGAINST YOUR SKIN.


GOOD.

HMPH.

GOOD.

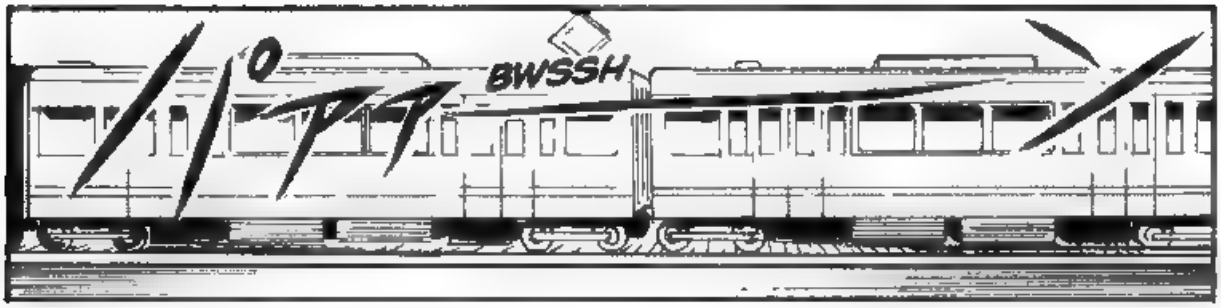

YOU COULD DAMAGE THE SCREWS.
SQIK
SQIK
THEN YOU UNSCREW THESE, GENTLY. IF YOU'RE TOO FORCEFUL...
LET'S SEE. FIRST, YOU GOTTA PLACE YOUR COMPUTER ON A LEVEL SURFACE.
P-CHAK
NEXT, WE GO AHEAD AND REMOVE THE COVER.
20 MINUTES LATER
DONE.
COULDN'T I HAVE TAKEN MY CLOTHES OFF AFTER I'D REMOVED THE COVER?
I JUST THOUGHT OF SOME-THING.
Memory slots
ANYWAY, NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT IN THE MEMORY.
YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL.
NAH, FORGET IT.

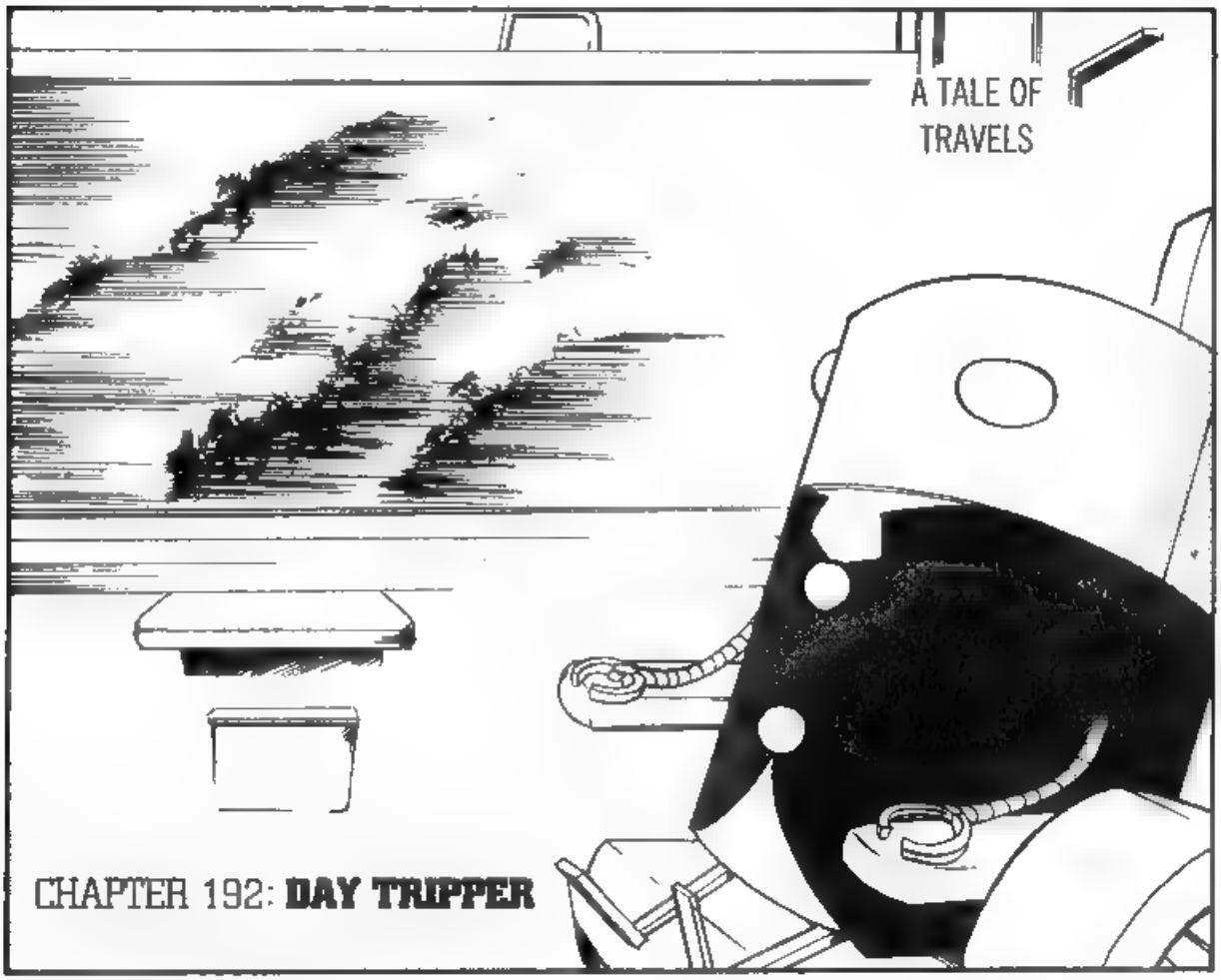
SKRKK
SKRK
IT WON'T GO IN.
AM I TRYIN' TO PUT IT IN THE WRONG WAY?
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M NOT STRONG, EITHER. I'LL TELL YA RIGHT NOW, I'M A HECK OF A LOT STRONGER THAN YOUR AVERAGE PC USER. IT'S JUST, IT'S HARD TO KNOW HOW MUCH STRENGTH TO USE. IF YOU USE TOO MUCH, YOUR MEMORY WILL GO "SNAP!" AND THAT'S JUST SCARY. THIS AIN'T THE TIME TO BE USIN' THAT KIND OF STRENGTH.
I SHOULD TRY DOIN' THIS OVER FROM THE BEGINNING.
YOU FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS, BUT YOU STILL CAN'T GET THAT DAMN FLAVOR PACKET OPEN.
IS THIS THING BROKEN? OR MAYBE IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU GET A PACK OF INSTANT RAMEN.
NO, I'M DOIN' IT RIGHT.

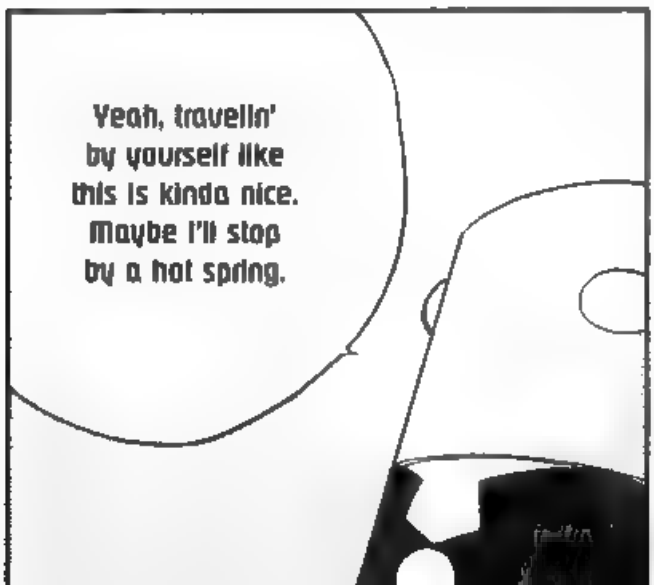
I'M COLD.
.....
.....
I FEEL LIKE I'VE GOT A SLIGHT FEVER, TOO.
THIS IS BAD. I'M STARTIN' TO GET **REALLY** COLD.
WHAT THE HELL GOOD WOULD CLOTHES BE IF I'M DOIN' THIS ALL OVER AGAIN?!
BUT THIS AIN'T THE TIME FOR ME TO START PUTTIN' CLOTHES ON.
.....
I'M GONNA HAVE TO FINISH THIS UP TOMORROW.
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO.
WHAT IS IT?
HEY, DID YOU ALL SEE THIS?

MAYBE SOME-THING'S GOIN' ON WITH HER AGENCY. WHO KNOWS?
NO WAY! BUT SHE'S ALREADY SO POPULAR. I NEVER THOUGHT SHE WOULD TAKE IT OFF!
WHOA, FOR REAL?!
YOU KNOW THAT HOT ACTRESS WE WERE TALKIN' ABOUT? SHE STRIPPED, MAN! SHE'S TOTALLY NUDE!
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT! SHE SHOULD'VE WAITED LONGER BEFORE TAKIN' HER CLOTHES OFF!
YEAH, BUT STILL. DON'T YOU THINK IT WAS KINDA EARLY FOR HER TO START GETTIN' NAKED?
I THINK HE CAUGHT A COLD.
WHAT'S WITH THE MASK?
CRACK!
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO!

IT'S GOTTEN RATHER CHILLY RECENTLY.

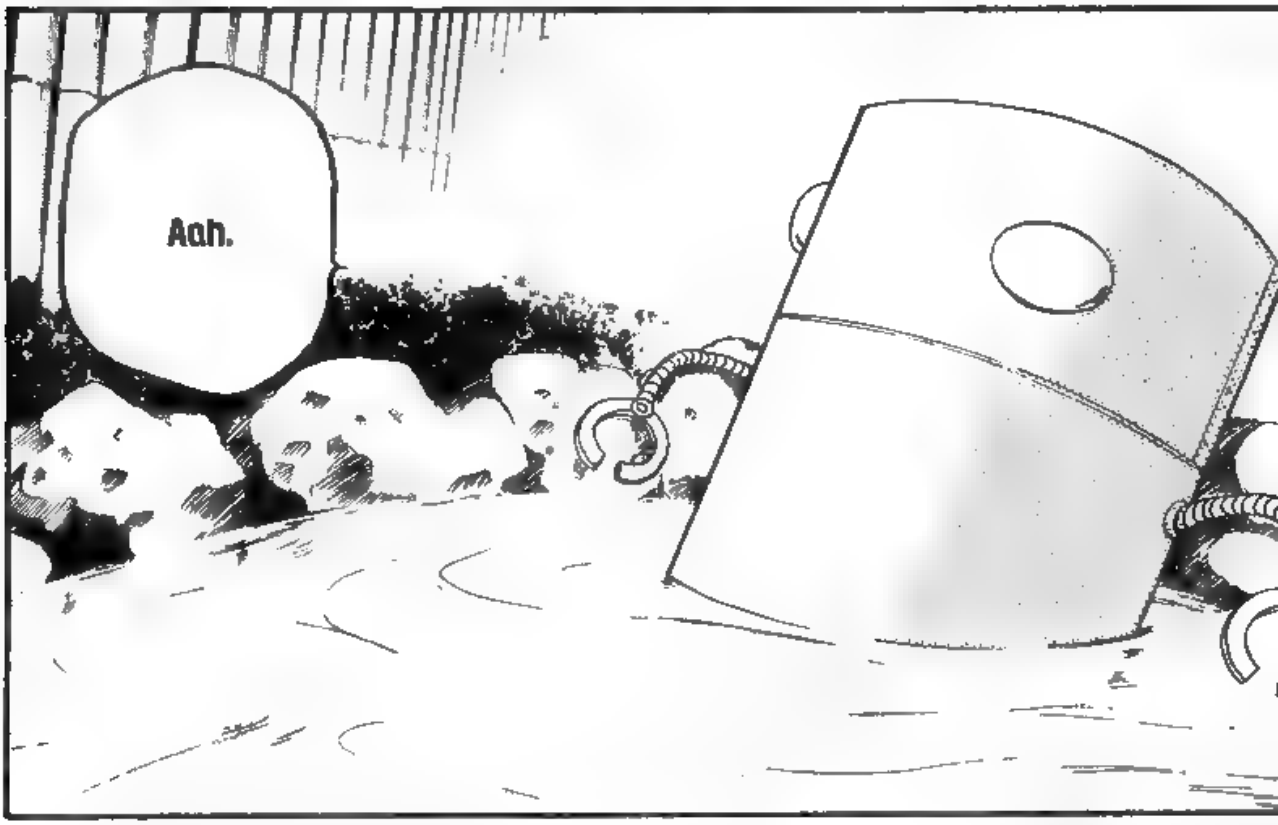

BWSSH


A TALE OF
TRAVELS
CHAPTER 192: DAY TRIPPER


Yeah, travelin' by yourself like this is kinda nice. Maybe I'll stop by a hot spring.

Once in a while, it's good to get away from the commotion of the big city and just take it easy.

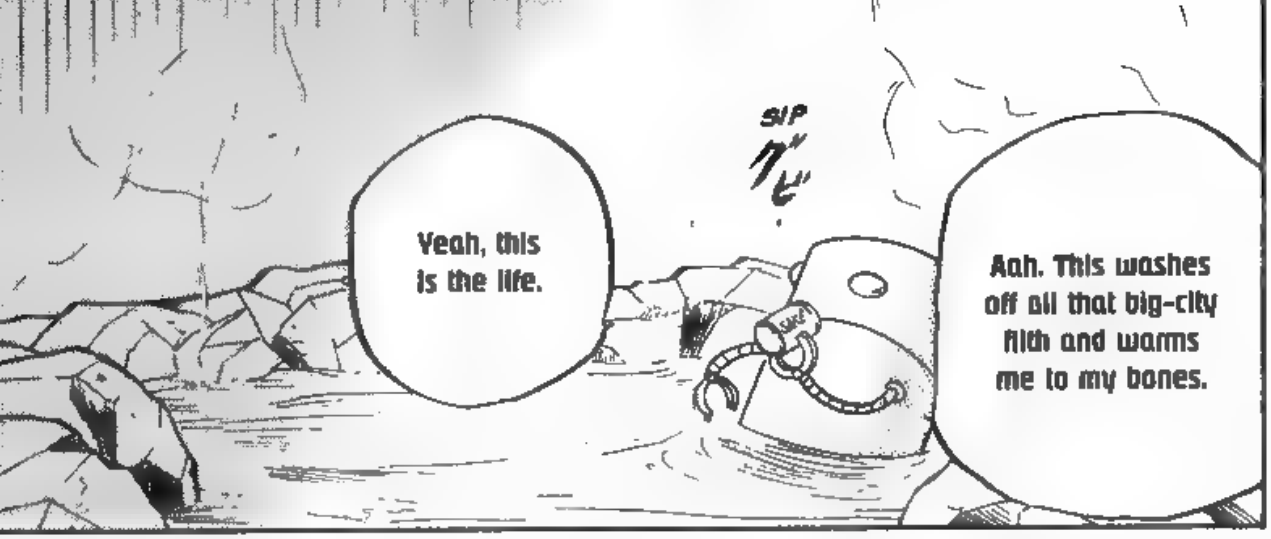
WELCOME
WELCO
HOT SPR

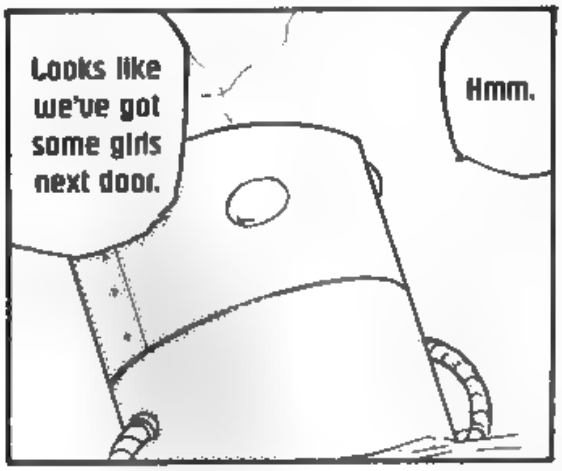

Aah.

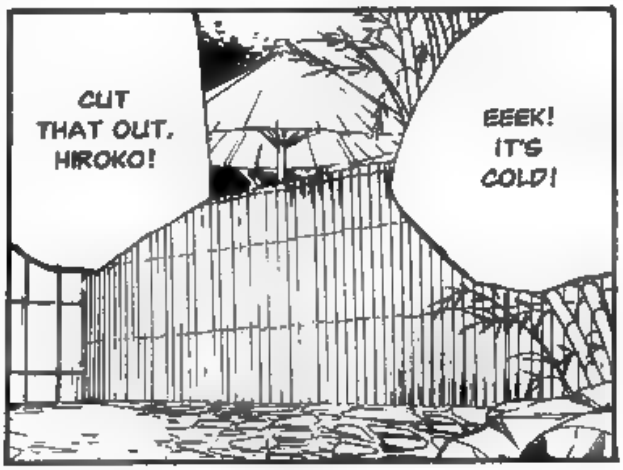
Whoops.
SPLSH
チャポ

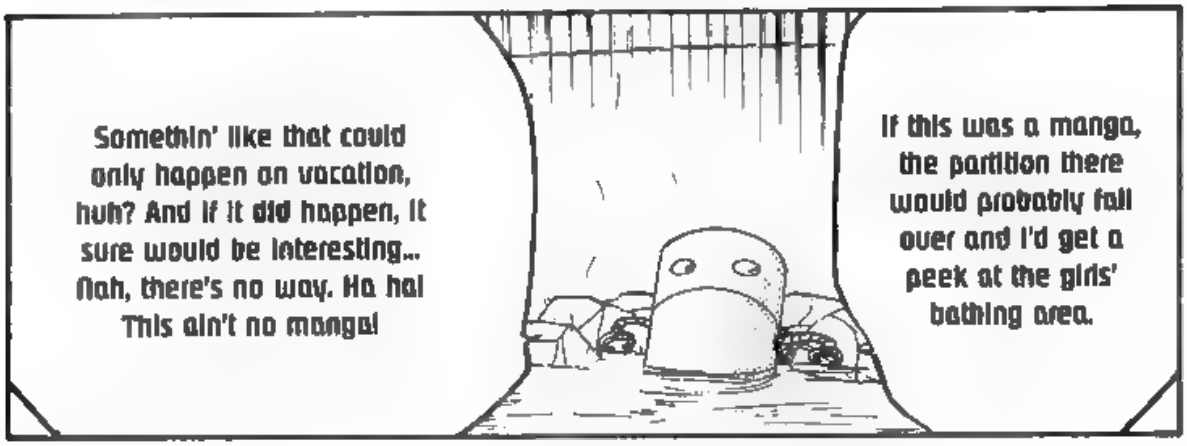
カチ TNK
カチ TNK

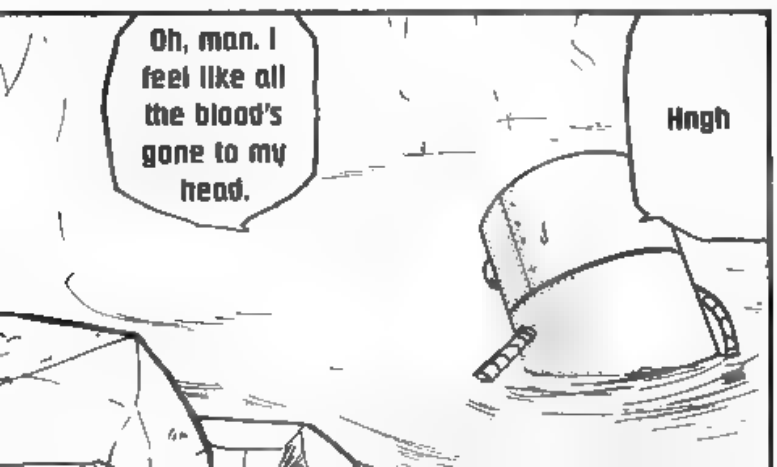
I think I'll have some hot saké while I soak.


SIP
Yeah, this is the life.
Aah. This washes off all that big-city filth and warms me to my bones.


Looks like we've got some girls next door.
Hmm.

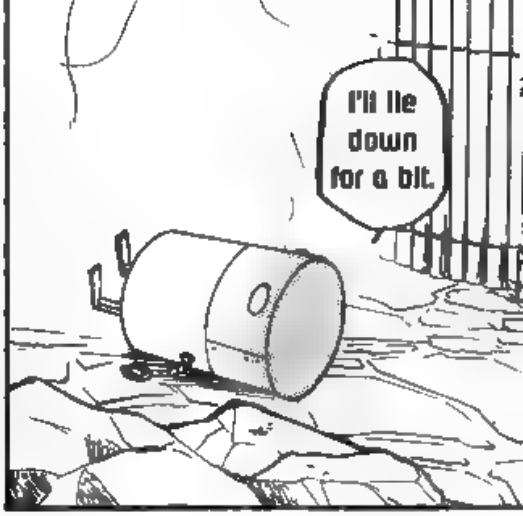

CUT THAT OUT, HIROKO!
EEEK! IT'S COLD!


Somethin' like that could only happen on vacation, huh? And if it did happen, it sure would be interesting... Nah, there's no way. Ha ha! This ain't no manga!
If this was a manga, the partition there would probably fall over and I'd get a peek at the girls' bathing area.


Oh, man. I feel like all the blood's gone to my head.
Hngh

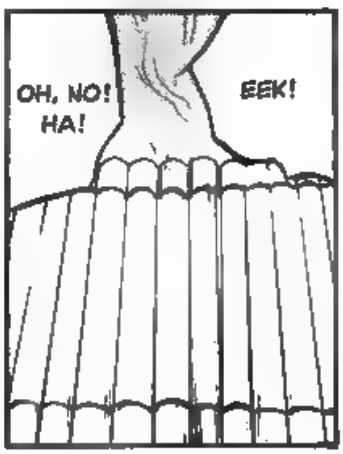
BEEP
BEEP

HA HA
HEH HEH
AAAH
WA HA! HA


I'll lie down for a bit.

FUNNY HOW YOU CAN END UP NOT COMIN' TO PLACES LIKE THIS **BECAUSE** THEY'RE LOCAL, HUH? ANYWAY, IT'S TOO BAD IT'S JUST US GUYS. I GUESS THERE'S NOT GONNA BE ANY ROMANCE ON THIS TRIP. HA HA!
YEAH, CELEBRATIN' YOUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION BY GOIN' TO A LOCAL HOT SPRING WITH YOUR FRIENDS REALLY IS THE BEST!

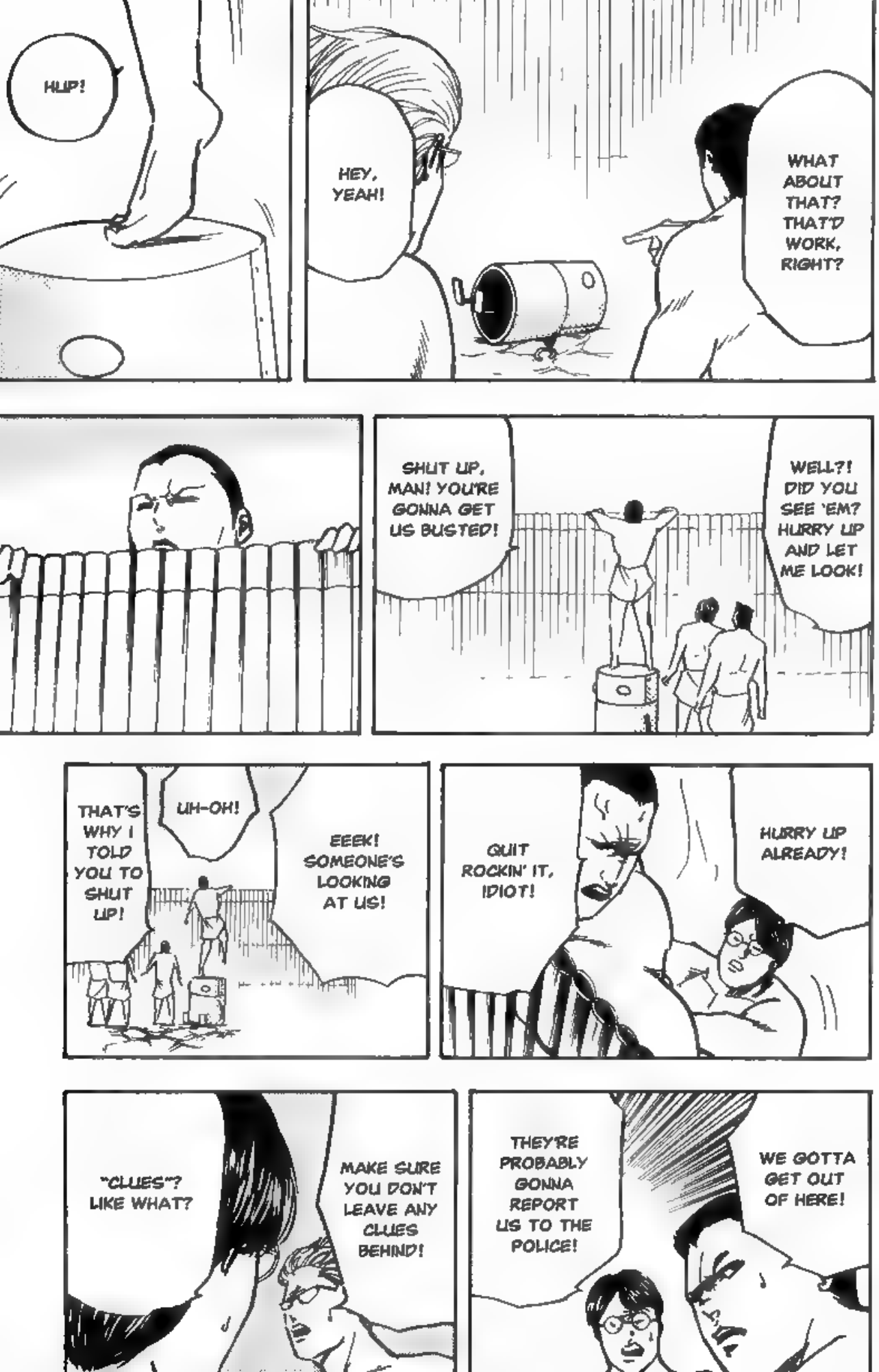
YOU'RE RIGHT. WHAT DO WE DO?
THERE ARE GIRLS OVER THERE.


OH, NO! HA!
EEK!

HM?
HEY, YOSHIO.

THAT WALL'S PRETTY HIGH, THOUGH. IF ONLY WE HAD SOMETHIN' TO STAND ON...
WE CHECK 'EM OUT, OF COURSE!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?


HUP!
HEY, YEAH!
WHAT ABOUT THAT? THAT'D WORK, RIGHT?
SHUT UP, MAN! YOU'RE GONNA GET US BUSTED!
WELL?! DID YOU SEE 'EM? HURRY UP AND LET ME LOOK!
THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU TO SHUT UP!
UH-OH!
EEEK! SOMEONE'S LOOKING AT US!
QUIT ROCKIN' IT, IDIOT!
HURRY UP ALREADY!
"CLUES"? LIKE WHAT?
MAKE SURE YOU DON'T LEAVE ANY CLUES BEHIND!
THEY'RE PROBABLY GONNA REPORT US TO THE POLICE!
WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!

YEAH, THAT!
YOU MEAN THAT?
UH, LIKE ANYTHING WE USED TO TRY TO SNEAK A PEEK AT 'EM.
WELL...
OK.
MOVE IT! RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN!
THMP
THMP
THMP
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
TELL ME ABOUT IT. WE'RE A BUNCH OF IDIOTS, HUH? HA HA!
HUFF
HUFF
MAN, THAT WAS TOO SCARY!

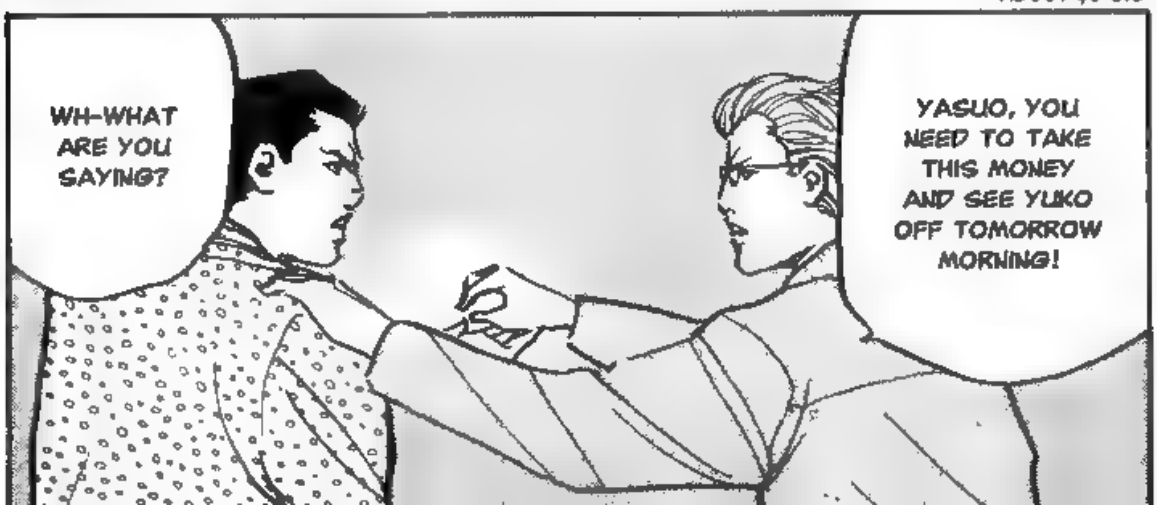
NAH, HE'S GOT A POINT. RIGHT UP TO THE END, NONE OF US HAD ANY LUCK WITH THE LADIES. IT KINDA MAKES GRADUATING A LITTLE SAD...
DUDE, DON'T SAY THEY WERE "DEAD"!
WELL, SEEIN' AS HOW OUR LOVE LIVES WERE ALL PRETTY MUCH DEAD, I THINK WE'RE GONNA LOOK BACK ON THIS AND LAUGH.
G-GET REAL! WE'RE NOT GOIN' OUT!
YASUO HERE STARTED SEEIN' THAT GIRL YUKO.
NOT ALL OF US HAD IT BAD.
NO. IN FACT, SHE'S MOVING AWAY TO TOKYO.
ARE YOU SERIOUS? YOU TWO AREN'T DATING?
I'M TELLING YOU, SHE'S NOT MY GIRLFRIEND! WE'RE JUST FRIENDS.
YUKO WAS THE PRETTIEST GIRL IN OUR GRADE. GETTIN' A GIRL LIKE THAT... YOU'RE OUR HERO, MAN!
NO WAY...
YEAH. SHE SAID SHE'S GONNA GO TO COLLEGE THERE. SHE'S LEAVIN' TOMORROW MORNING.
TOKYO?! SHE'S MOVIN' TO TOKYO?

. . . . . .
AND HER FAMILY'S RICH.
SHE SURE WAS SMART, HUH?

HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, YOSHIO?
HEY, HOW MUCH DO YOU ALL HAVE ON YOU?

FINE. 520 YEN IT IS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? ALL YOU HAD WAS 120!
JUST 520 YEN? YOU SONS OF BITCHES REALLY ARE POOR, AREN'T YOU?

*ABOUT $5 U.S.


WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
YASUO, YOU NEED TO TAKE THIS MONEY AND SEE YUKO OFF TOMORROW MORNING!

HA HA! THANKS. I APPRECIATE IT.
SORRY, MAN. BUT IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS, RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT 520 YEN IS KIND OF...
IT'S YUKO'S FAREWELL GIFT. YOU CAN'T JUST GO EMPTY-HANDED.
YEAH! C'MON, YASUO!
YOU HAVE TO!
BUT I DON'T THINK I'M GONNA GO.
TRUST ME!
I DON'T KNOW...
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SAY GOODBYE. THAT'LL BE ENOUGH TO MAKE HER HAPPY.
HUH?!
TAKE THIS, TOO.
STILL, I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT GOING WITH JUST 520 YEN.

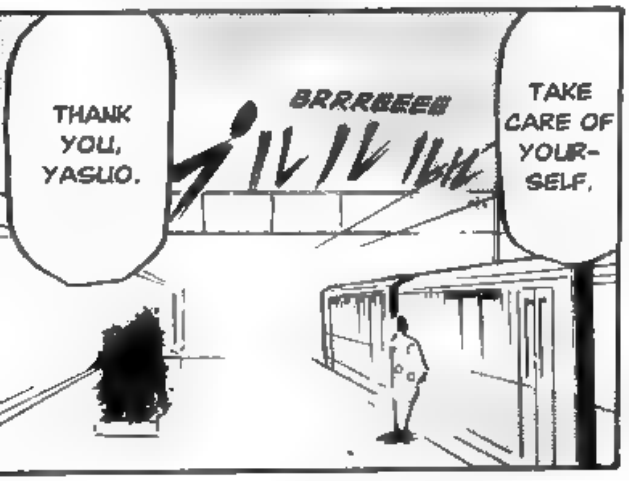
JUST GO!
YEAH, BUT I HAVEN'T DECIDED IF I'M GOING OR NOT.
'CUZ IT'S SO BIG! AND IT LOOKS GREAT. ANYWAY, WOMEN DON'T CARE WHAT YOU GIVE 'EM-- ANYTHING WILL MAKE THEM HAPPY.
TH-THIS THING'S PRETTY HEAVY.
THE NEXT DAY
YUKO!

OH...
YES, MY FRIENDS. WE'VE ALREADY SAID GOODBYE.

HUH? DIDN'T ANYBODY ELSE?
YASUO. YOU CAME!

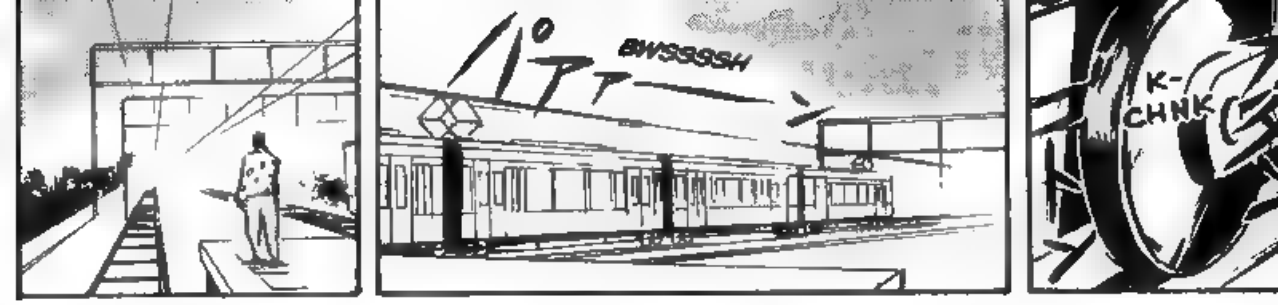
HUH?
H-HERE! THIS IS FOR YOU.

I CAN'T THINK OF WHAT TO SAY. IT'S LIKE THE WORDS WON'T COME OUT! BUT THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE.

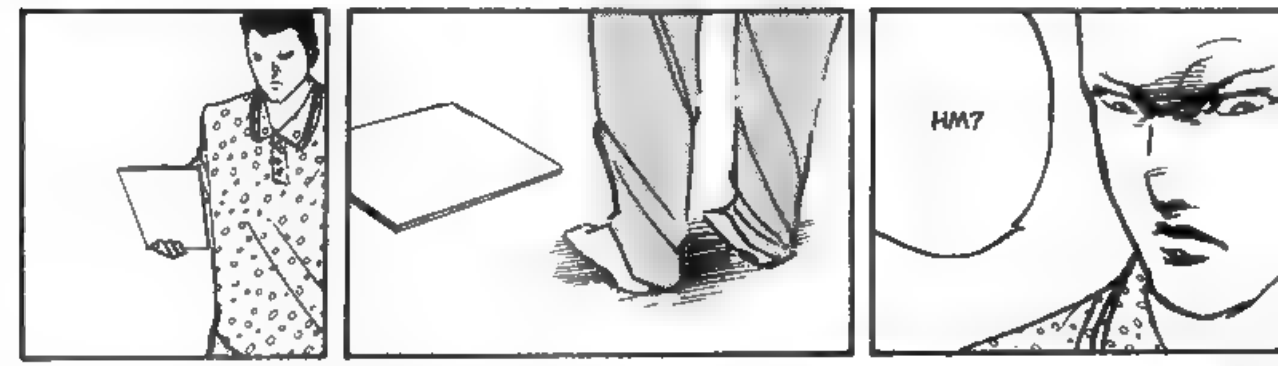

THANK YOU, YASUO.
BRRRRRR
TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELF.

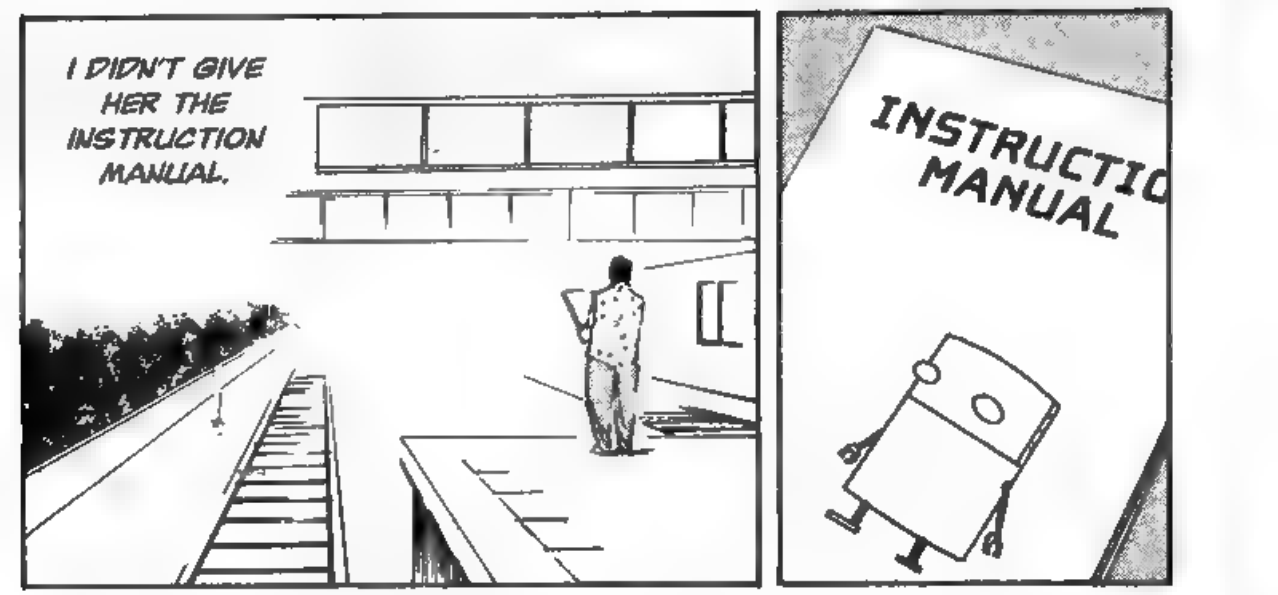
UH, I'M NOT SO SURE MYSELF. I THINK IT'S SOME KIND OF ORNAMENT. ANYWAY, I WANT YOU TO TAKE IT WITH YOU TO TOKYO.
WHAT IS IT?

SEE YOU.



STILL, I'M GLAD I CAME. AT LEAST I GOT TO SAY GOODBYE.
WHEN YUKO SAID "SEE YOU" AND TURNED AWAY, HER FACE WAS SO DISTANT. SHE'S OFF TO THE CITY NOW, AND SHE PROBABLY DOESN'T PLAN ON EVER SEEING ME AGAIN.





***YASUO'S LOVE LIFE*: NOW RUNNING SERIALLY (AND SPORADICALLY).**

CHAPTER 193: **BAD COMPANY**

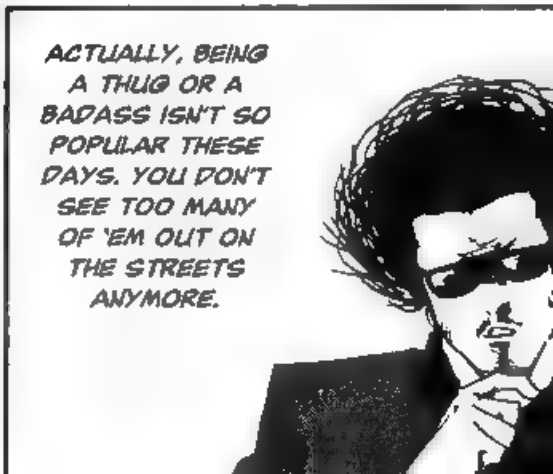
I'M THE LEADER OF DESTRADE HIGH'S 1ST YEARS, AND THE TOUGHEST SON OF A BITCH YOU'VE EVER SEEN. I'M ALSO A FAN OF STAND-UP COMEDY WHO LIKES TO SUBMIT JOKES TO LATE-NIGHT RADIO PROGRAMS. BUT THAT'S A SECRET.
MY NAME'S NOBORU YAMAGUCHI.

Let's go!
Alright!
THESE GUYS' CONVERSATIONS ARE REALLY BORING.

SO YOU WIN A FIGHT, SO WHAT? WHAT HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'LL GET ANY PRIZE MONEY. IS IT EVEN WORTH IT?
DAY IN AND DAY OUT, ALL THEY EVER TALK ABOUT IS FIGHTING. DON'T THEY GET TIRED OF IT?

THOSE IDIOTS MAY BE ENJOYING THEMSELVES, BUT THAT KIND OF TALK IS JUST A PAIN FOR WHOEVER HAS TO LISTEN TO IT.
I GUESS IT'S GOOD MATERIAL FOR ONCE YOU'VE ENTERED THE WORKPLACE. SO, WHEN YOU START SWAPPING STORIES ABOUT YOUR PAST, YOU CAN SAY, "YEAH, I USED TO BE A BADASS." BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT.

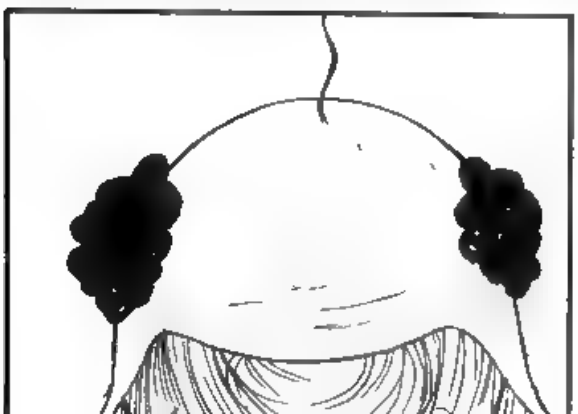
FOR A COMEDIAN, NOTHING'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING RESPONSIVE TO TRENDS.

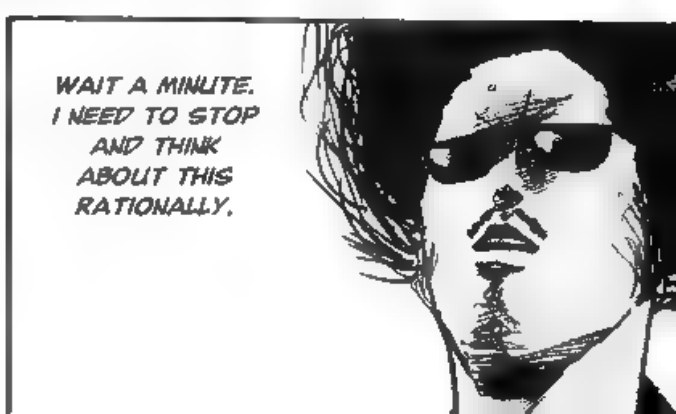

ACTUALLY, BEING A THUG OR A BADASS ISN'T SO POPULAR THESE DAYS. YOU DON'T SEE TOO MANY OF 'EM OUT ON THE STREETS ANYMORE.

PATHETIC. EVERY-THING OUT OF THESE GUYS' MOUTHS IS SO BORING!
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES!
I'M GONNA GIVE THOSE CROMARTIE CHUMPS A TASTE OF MY RIGHT HOOK! HEH HEH.
HECK, EVEN ISHIKAWA'S MORE INTERESTING THAN THESE MORONS.
DON'T THEY EVEN CARE ABOUT HAVING CONVERSATIONS THAT OTHER PEOPLE FIND INTERESTING? ARE THEY THAT SELFISH?
SURE, HE CAN GET THE OCCASIONAL LAUGH, BUT HE JUST DOESN'T HAVE ANY COMEDIC SENSE. THAT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO BE BORN WITH, AND HE WASN'T.
Ishikawa
OF COURSE, IT'S ONLY IN A "SLIGHTLY BETTER IN COMPARISON TO THOSE GUYS" SORT OF WAY. YOU ASK ME, HE'S STILL A LITTLE MORE THAN A BEGINNER.
IF YOU'VE BEEN BORING YOUR WHOLE LIFE, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN SUDDENLY BECOME FUNNY OVERNIGHT.
WHEN SOMEONE IS BORING, IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW HARD THEY TRY, THEY'RE NEVER GONNA BE FUNNY.

HEH!
MORNING, ISHIKAWA!
HEY.

NOW SUDDENLY HE'S FUNNY! HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?!
THAT...THAT'S FUNNY. BUT ISHIKAWA'S ALWAYS BEEN SO BORING.

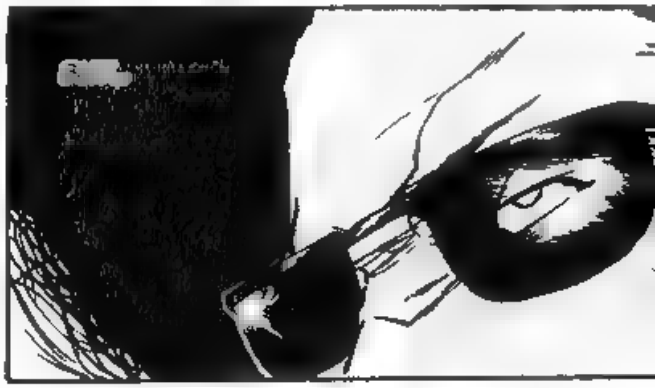



WAIT A MINUTE. I NEED TO STOP AND THINK ABOUT THIS RATIONALLY.

PHEW
OK, NOW I FEEL BETTER. I WAS PRETTY WORRIED FOR A SECOND THERE.
OH, I GET IT. IT'S THE CAP THAT'S FUNNY, NOT ISHIKAWA. YEAH, THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD JUST SUDDENLY BECOME FUNNY.
I LAUGHED. IT WAS A SHORT LAUGH, BUT A LAUGH NONETHELESS. THAT MEANS I HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT WAS FUNNY. WHY, WHY?!
WAIT A MINUTE.
BUT TO JUST SHOW UP AND SUDDENLY HAVE THAT THING ON YOUR HEAD...IT'S NOT ONLY BOLD, IT'S SOME PRETTY SERIOUS TECHNIQUE.
THAT BALD-CAP GAG IS SO OLD THAT IT'S A CLICHE.
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT--ISHIKAWA'S COMEDIC SENSE HAS IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY.
USUALLY PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE A BIG DEAL OF IT, LIKE, "HEY, LOOK AT THIS THING ON MY HEAD! PRETTY FUNNY, HUH?" BUT HE'S STAYING PERFECTLY CALM AND COLLECTED.

ISHIKAWA... I'VE CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT YOU.
ALRIGHT, I TAKE BACK MY EARLIER STATEMENT. IF YOU'VE BEEN BORING YOUR WHOLE LIFE, SOMETIMES YOU CAN SUDDENLY BECOME FUNNY OVERNIGHT.

I HEARD WHAT YOU ALL SAID! LET'S GO BURN CROMARTIE TO THE GROUND!

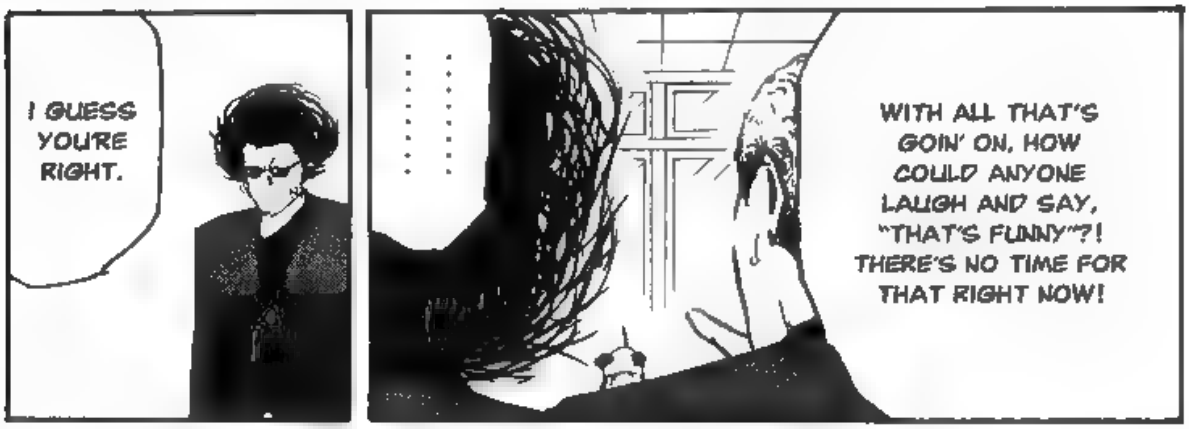


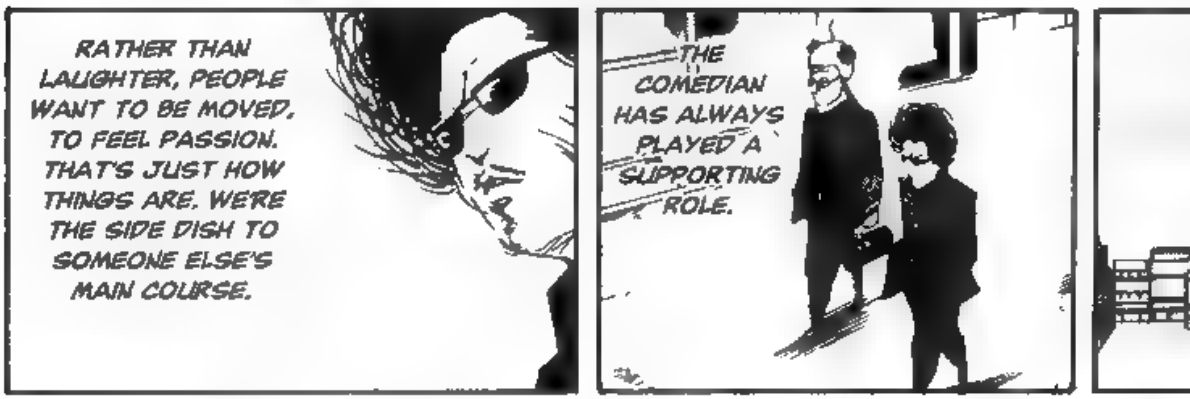
THEY'RE COMPLETELY IGNORING YOU.
YEAH, ABOUT 30 OF 'EM.
HAVE WE GOT THE TROOPS TOGETHER?
ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP, YOU JUST LET ME KNOW!

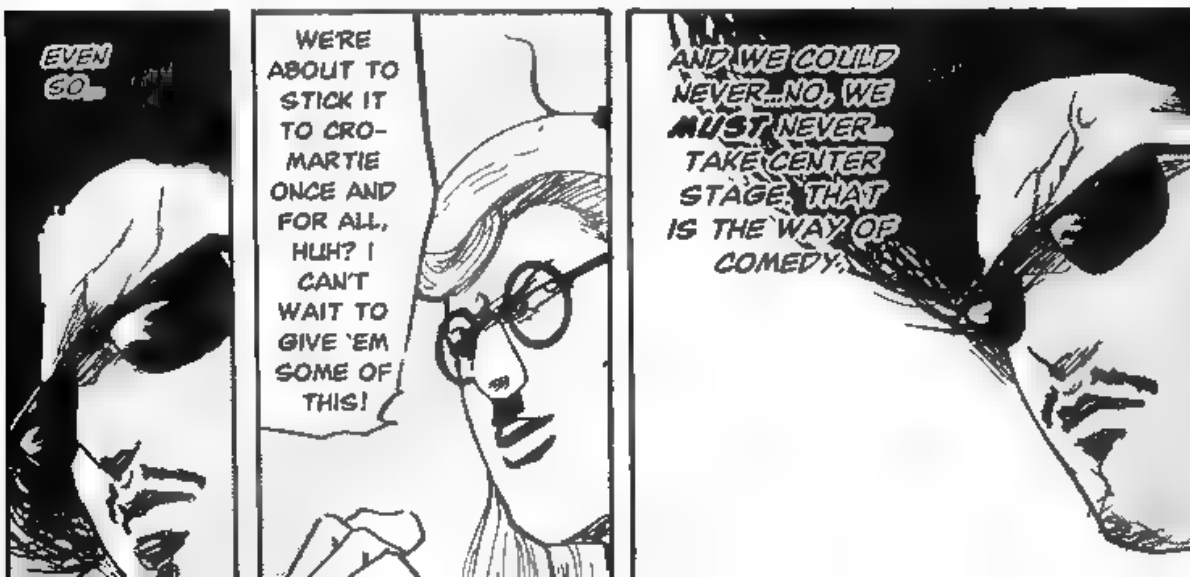
POOR GUY. THEY'RE NOT GIVING HIM A LEG TO STAND ON.
SOMEBODY LAUGH, DAMMIT! THIS IS PRETTY FUNNY.

SO WHY ARE THEY ALL IGNORING HIM?
NO, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S A FRICKIN' BALD CAP! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND?! AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KID WOULD GET IT.
AH! MAYBE THE HUMOR'S A LITTLE TOO HARD FOR THEM TO GRASP.
I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.
WHAT IS IT?
HUH?
HEY, ASAI. COME HERE A MINUTE.
SO YOU'VE NOTICED.
YEAH, HE DOES.
IT'S ABOUT ISHIKAWA. HE'S GOT SOMETHING ON HIS HEAD, DOESN'T HE?
IT'S FUNNY, HUH? THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU LAUGH, OR AT LEAST GO "HEH"?
YEAH. IT'S FUNNY.
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S PRETTY FUNNY?

EVERYONE'S DEAD SERIOUS ABOUT THIS!
THIS IS LIFE-AND-DEATH TIME, YAMAGUCHI! WE CAN'T BE SITTIN' AROUND LAUGHING. WE HAVE TO GO OUT THERE AND **FIGHT**. GET OUR NAMES OUT ONTO THE STREETS! IT'S EITHER THAT OR WE RUN AWAY AND LOSE EVERYTHING!


I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
. . . . . .
WITH ALL THAT'S GOIN' ON, HOW COULD ANYONE LAUGH AND SAY, "THAT'S FUNNY"?! THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT RIGHT NOW!


RATHER THAN LAUGHTER, PEOPLE WANT TO BE MOVED, TO FEEL PASSION. THAT'S JUST HOW THINGS ARE. WE'RE THE SIDE DISH TO SOMEONE ELSE'S MAIN COURSE.
THE COMEDIAN HAS ALWAYS PLAYED A SUPPORTING ROLE.

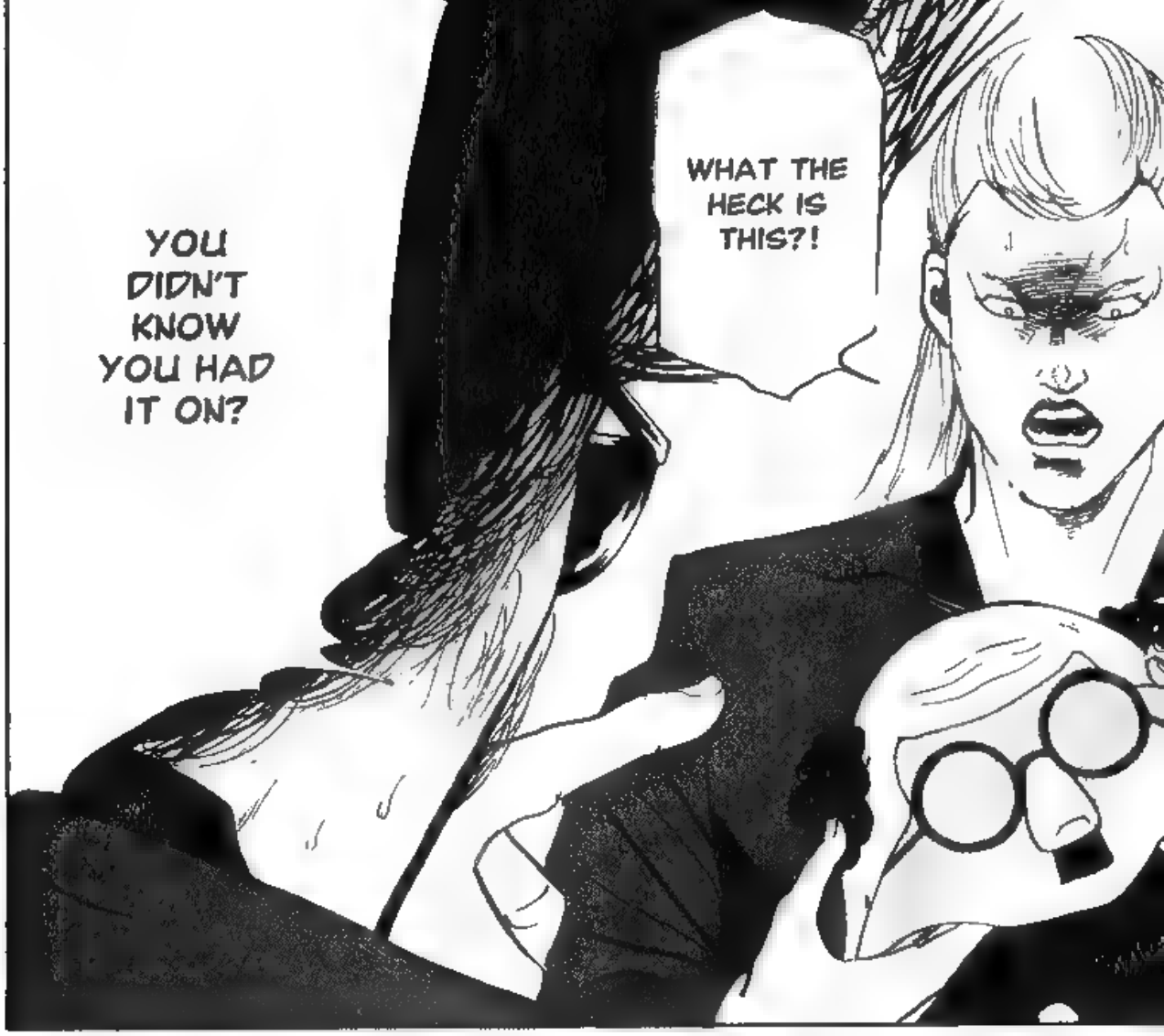

EVEN SO...
WE'RE ABOUT TO STICK IT TO CRO-MARTIE ONCE AND FOR ALL, HUH? I CAN'T WAIT TO GIVE 'EM SOME OF THIS!
AND WE COULD NEVER...NO, WE **MUST** NEVER TAKE CENTER STAGE. THAT IS THE WAY OF COMEDY.

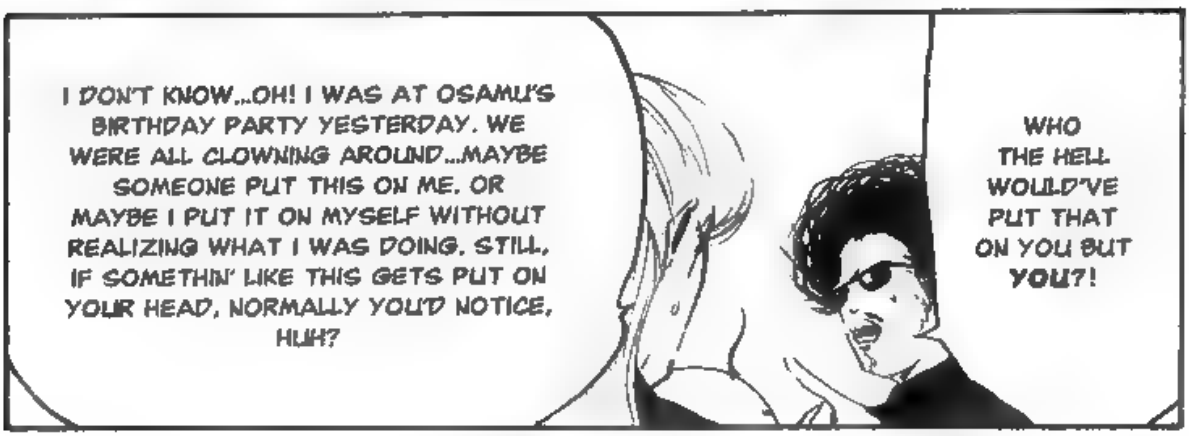
I FEEL PRETTY BAD FOR ISHIKAWA.
I DON'T USUALLY GET TOO RILED UP ABOUT STUFF, BUT WHEN IT'S TIME TO THROW DOWN, I THROW DOWN! YOU MESS WITH ME AND THAT'S IT. IT'S OVER! THAT'S WHAT MAKES A MAN!

STILL, IT'S PROBABLY FOR THE BEST.
HE FINALLY COMES TO HIS COMEDIC SENSES, AND THIS HAD TO HAPPEN. HE CAN'T GET A SINGLE LAUGH. IT'S JUST TOO SAD.

I CAN'T DRAG YOU DOWN, TOO. YOU MUST WALK ANOTHER PATH, THE SAME PATH AS EVERYONE ELSE.
THE WAY OF COMEDY CAN ONLY LEAD TO RUIN. DON'T THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY, ISHIKAWA-- THE CYCLE MUST END WITH ME.

MY HEAD?
I SAID, "GIVE IT UP"! ENOUGH'S ENOUGH ALREADY. JUST TAKE THAT THING OFF YOUR HEAD!
HUH?
LOOK, ISHIKAWA... JUST GIVE IT UP, ALRIGHT?


YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD IT ON?
WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?!


I DON'T KNOW...OH! I WAS AT OSAMU'S BIRTHDAY PARTY YESTERDAY. WE WERE ALL CLOWNING AROUND...MAYBE SOMEONE PUT THIS ON ME. OR MAYBE I PUT IT ON MYSELF WITHOUT REALIZING WHAT I WAS DOING. STILL, IF SOMETHIN' LIKE THIS GETS PUT ON YOUR HEAD, NORMALLY YOU'D NOTICE, HUH?
WHO THE HELL WOULD'VE PUT THAT ON YOU BUT YOU?!

I'M STARTING TO NOT CARE ANYMORE...
I CAN'T TAKE IT. THIS IS JUST TOO FUNNY! WAIT, DON'T TELL ME HE'S DOING ALL THIS JUST TO MAKE ME LAUGH! OR IS HE REALLY THAT BIG OF AN IDIOT?

THIS IS THE END--I CAN'T LAUGH AT ANY MORE OF HIS GAGS! WHAT IF IT GIVES HIM A MISGUIDED SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND HE DECIDES HE WANTS TO BE AN ENTERTAINER? IT WOULD BE ALL MY FAULT!

NO, WAIT! I JUST SWORE I WOULDN'T TAKE HIM DOWN THE SAME PATH AS ME!

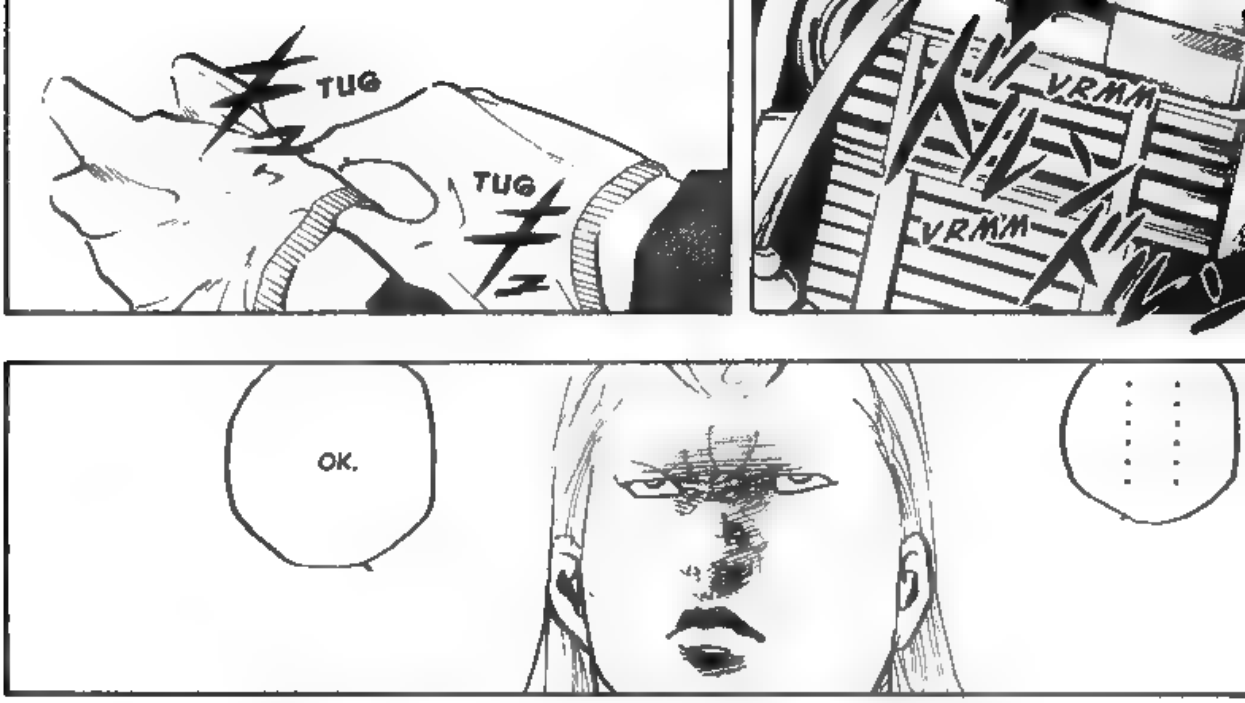
COULD IT BE I'M WORRIED ABOUT HAVING ISHIKAWA AS MY COMEDIC RIVAL? NO, THAT'S NOT IT! I JUST DON'T WANT HIM TO THROW HIS LIFE AWAY! COMEDY IS NO PROFESSION TO BE RECOMMENDING TO PEOPLE.

YEAH, I THINK I'LL DO THAT. I GUESS I AM KINDA TIRED.

LOOK, I CAN TELL YOU'RE TIRED. YOU SHOULD GO HOME AND REST.

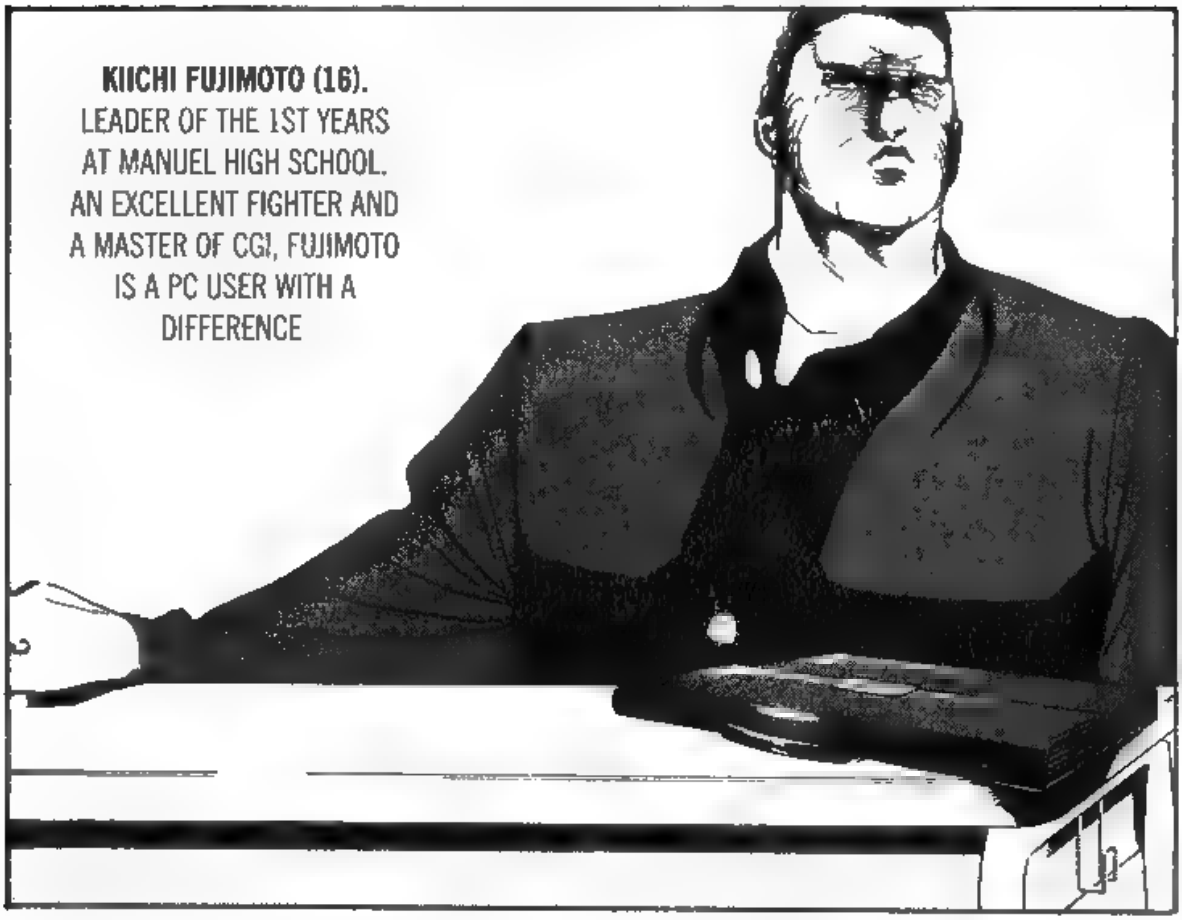
OH. WELL, BE CAREFUL, OK?

I RODE MY BIKE TO SCHOOL TODAY.

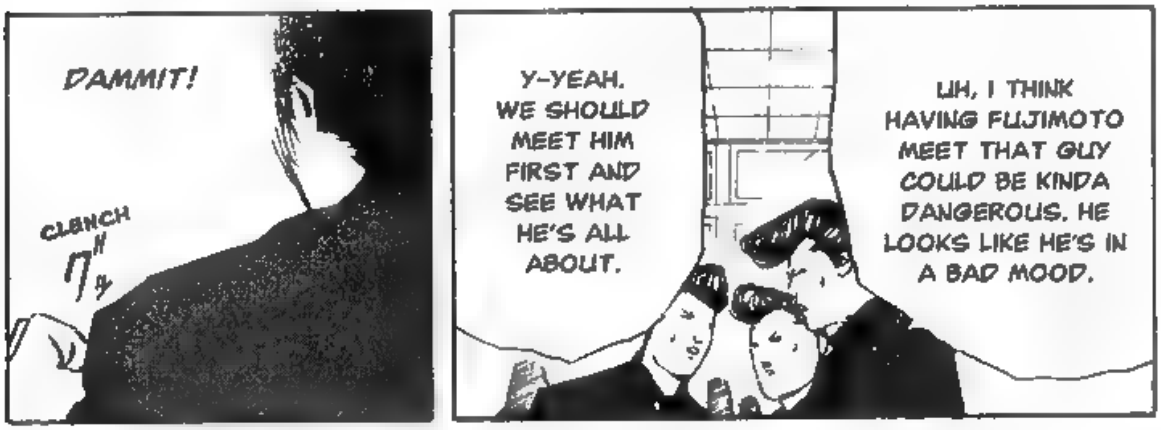


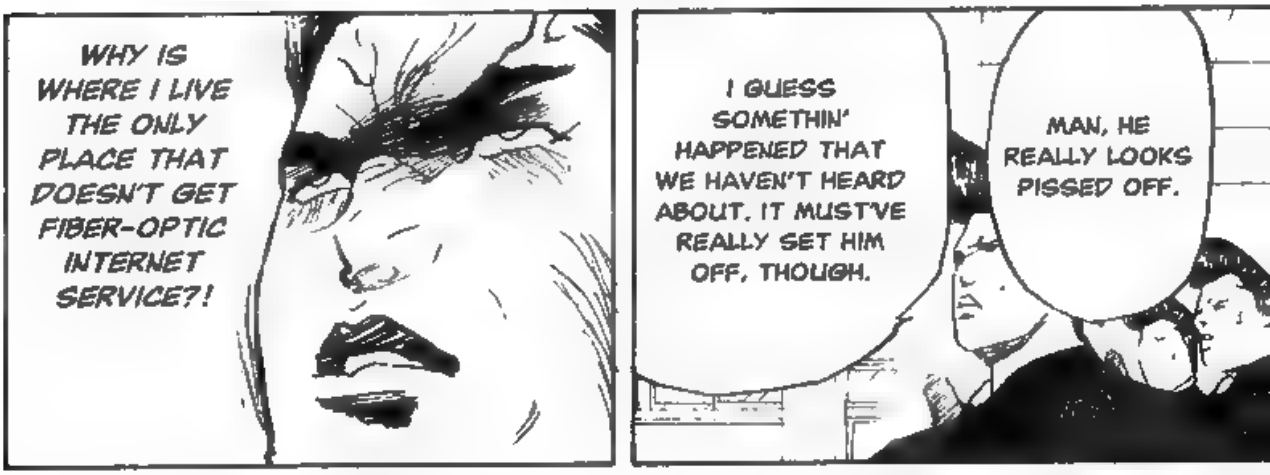
ISHIKAWA: COMEDIC TALENT ON THE RISE. MAYBE.

CHAPTER 194: **SOLID STATE SURVIVOR**


KIICHI FUJIMOTO (16).
LEADER OF THE 1ST YEARS AT MANUEL HIGH SCHOOL. AN EXCELLENT FIGHTER AND A MASTER OF CGI, FUJIMOTO IS A PC USER WITH A DIFFERENCE

YEAH. APPARENTLY, HE WAS PRETTY ACTIVE BACK IN HIS HOMETOWN. THEY SAY IN A ONE-ON-ONE FIGHT, HE'S NOTHIN' TO FOOL AROUND WITH.
YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM, TOO?


DAMMIT!
CLENCH
Y-YEAH. WE SHOULD MEET HIM FIRST AND SEE WHAT HE'S ALL ABOUT.
UH, I THINK HAVING FUJIMOTO MEET THAT GUY COULD BE KINDA DANGEROUS. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN A BAD MOOD.


WHY IS WHERE I LIVE THE ONLY PLACE THAT DOESN'T GET FIBER-OPTIC INTERNET SERVICE?!
I GUESS SOMETHIN' HAPPENED THAT WE HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT. IT MUST'VE REALLY SET HIM OFF, THOUGH.
MAN, HE REALLY LOOKS PISSED OFF.

RATTLE
GOOD. BRING HIM IN.
HEY, I BROUGHT THAT TRANSFER STUDENT.
THIS REALLY NARROWS MY OPTIONS...IT'S GONNA CAUSE A WHOLE LOT OF PROBLEMS, TOO.

CALL ME SHIMADA.
YOU'RE SHIMADA, HUH?
THAT'S RIGHT.
I HEARD OF YOU. YOU LIKED TO STIR THINGS UP BACK HOME, DIDN'T YOU?
I GUESS.
YOU KNOW THAT SAYING "WHEN IN ROME" OR WHATEVER? WELL HERE, WE'VE GOT RULES, AND YOU GOTTA LEARN TO LIVE BY 'EM.
THAT GUY OVER THERE IS FUJIMOTO, OUR BOSS. YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM?
YEAH
YOU'RE TOUGH, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. BUT EVERYONE'S GOT SOMEONE THEY CAN NEVER BEAT.

YOU KNOW WHAT MAKES A GUY TOUGH? IT'S NOT JUST BEIN' STRONG-- IT'S KNOWING WHEN TO REIN YOURSELF IN.
YOU START WINNING ENOUGH FIGHTS, YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF GETTIN' A LITTLE TOO CONFIDENT. THAT'S WHEN YOU TAKE ON MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW...AND YOU GET YOUR ASS HANDED TO YOU.

I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO WITH DSL.

. . . . . .

IF YOU CAN KEEP THAT IN MIND, I THINK WE'LL GET ALONG FINE.

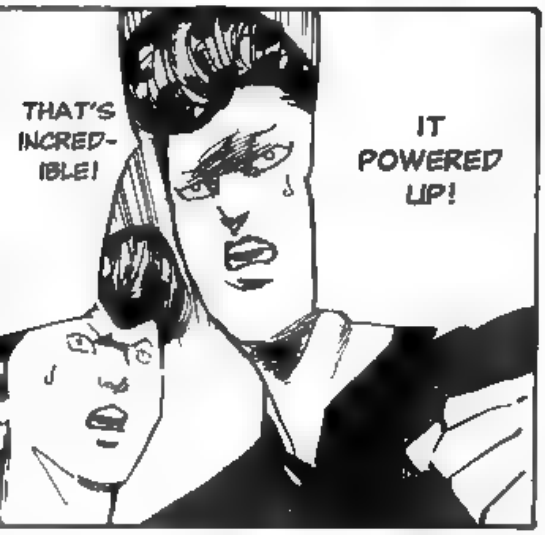
WELL, WE'VE GOT A LONG WAYS AHEAD OF US. LET'S TAKE OUR TIME AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, SHIMADA.
HEY, THIS GUY'S A FIGHTER AND A THINKER!
YEAH, I KNOW ALL THAT. I MAY BE A THUG, BUT I'M NOT AN IDIOT.

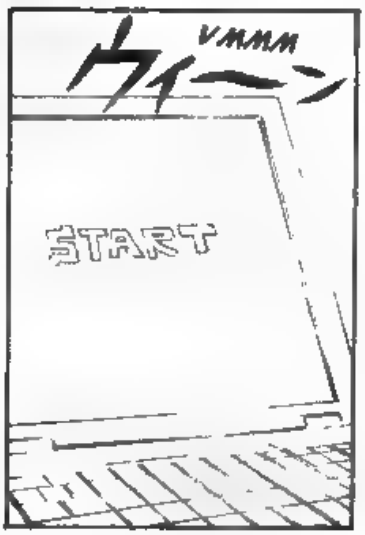
I CAN'T EVEN INSTALL THE DAMN MEMORY I JUST BOUGHT!
SHIMADA MUST REALLY BE GETTIN' TO HIM, HUH?
FUJIMOTO LOOKS LIKE HE'S STILL IN A BAD MOOD.
I GOT BUSTED POSING AS SOMEBODY ELSE ONLINE, SO I'VE GOTTA CHANGE PRO-VIDERS AS FAST AS I CAN.
YOU KNOW, I WENT TO MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH SHIMADA. I COULD TELL YOU ALL KINDS OF STUFF ABOUT HIM.
DID I BUY MEMORY FOR A MAC BY MISTAKE?
HE'S PROBABLY GOT ALL SORTS OF PROBLEMS WE CAN'T RELATE TO.
WELL, HE IS THE BOSS.
THERE'S MORE TO SHIMADA THAN JUST FIGHTING, YOU KNOW. HE'S ALSO REALLY GOOD AT COMPUTERS.
MAN, I'M GLAD. I FEEL LIKE WE'VE JUST MADE A POWERFUL NEW FRIEND.
HA HA! CUT THAT OUT.
IF YOU TRY TALKIN' TO HIM, YOU'LL SEE HE'S A REALLY NICE GUY. HE LOOKS ALL HARD AND RUGGED, BUT HE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY SHY.
DUDE, WE'VE NEVER EVEN **SEEN** A COM-PUTER!
THAT'S AWE-SOME!
I'M NOT A PRO OR ANYTHING.
COM-PUTERS?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?

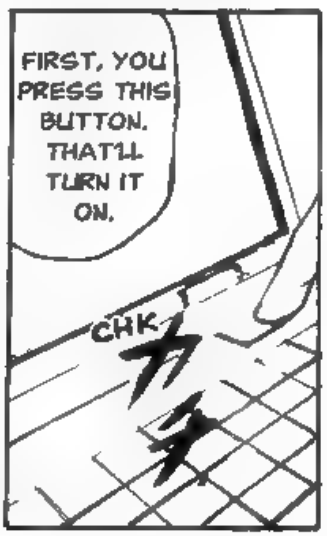
HE'S GOOD AT COMPUT-ERS?!
COMPUT-ERS...
COMPUTERS...
OF COURSE NOT! DON'T BE STUPID!
NO ONE AT OUR SCHOOL KNOWS HOW TO USE A COMPUTER, RIGHT?
I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND ALL THIS, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE ONE MANLY MAN!
NAH.
THAT'S AMAZING!
DON'T PUT ME IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS YOU!
YOU SONS OF BITCHES!
SURE.
YEAH. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD SHOW IT TO US SOMETIME?
WE'RE REALLY IMPRESSED, SHIMADA.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE!
A LAPTOP!
I BROUGHT IT WITH ME.
COMPUTER

OK.
DUDE, SHOW ME SOME-THING.


THAT'S INCRED-IBLE!
IT POWERED UP!


VMMM
START


FIRST, YOU PRESS THIS BUTTON. THAT'LL TURN IT ON.
CHK

WHAT?! THERE'S A TRASH BIN IN THE COMPUTER?
ALRIGHT. NEXT, I'LL PLACE THIS DOCUMENT INTO THE TRASH BIN.
MAKE IT DO SOMETHING ELSE!

THAT'S NOTHING TO GET WORKED UP ABOUT, YOU IDIOTS.

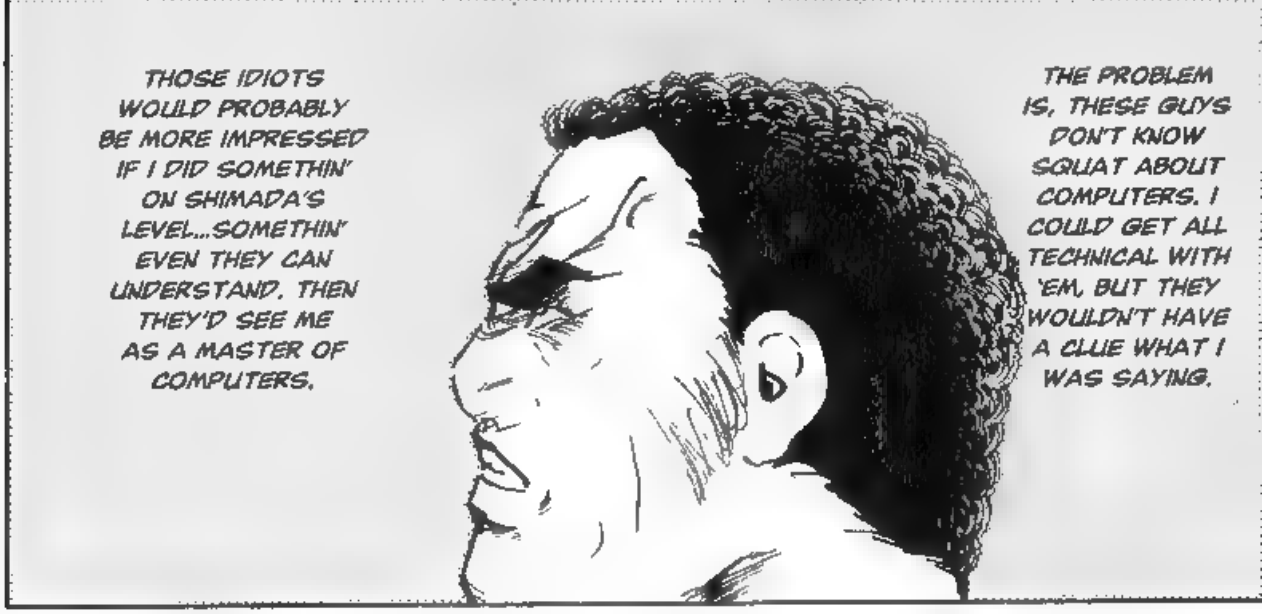
I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW ALL THIS, BUT IT'S PRETTY AMAZING!
WHOA! IT'S GONE!
BEEP
NEXT, WE DELETE IT.
TRASH
SO WE'LL JUST PLACE IT IN HERE.
WE DON'T NEED THIS ANY-MORE...

I WANT TO GIVE THOSE IDIOTS A PIECE OF MY MIND, BUT IF I START GOIN' AFTER ALL OF 'EM, IT COULD DAMAGE MY POSITION. ARGH, I CAN'T STAND LETTING 'EM CARRY ON ABOUT COMPUTERS LIKE THIS!
THOSE DAMN NEWBS ARE GETTIN' ALL WORKED UP OVER NOTHING! YOU ASK ME, THIS IS JUST CRAZY!

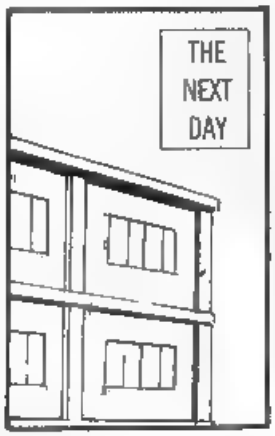
HE COULD BE GOIN' OVER STUFF THAT'S SIMPLE ENOUGH FOR THESE BOZOS TO UNDERSTAND, BUT ACTUALLY KNOW A LOT MORE. AND IF HE KNOWS MORE THAN ME, IT'S GONNA BECOME A MATTER OF PRIDE.
I'VE GOTTA WATCH WHAT I SAY, THOUGH. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THIS SHIMADA KNOWS.

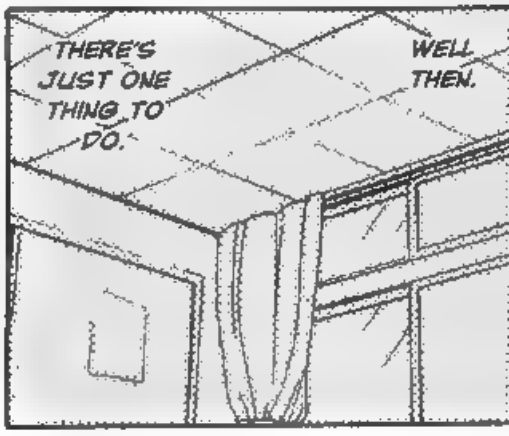
HOW MANY MEGAHERTZ IS THAT PROCESSOR?
FUJI-MOTO? WHAT IS IT?
GOT A MIN-UTE?
WOW!

HUH?!
NOT TO BE RUDE, BUT RIGHT NOW WE'RE TALKIN' ABOUT COMPUTERS. WOULD YOU MIND NOT CHANGING THE SUBJECT?
HM?
UH...
A BADASS KNOWS HOW TO USE A COMPUTER...I'M MOVED!
OH, BUT STILL, THAT'S AWESOME!
THAT'S ABOUT ALL I KNOW. I'M STILL LEARNING.
SHOW US SOMETHING ELSE!
SORRY, SHIMADA. THAT HAD NOTHIN' TO DO WITH WHAT WE WERE TALKIN' ABOUT.
YEAH!
NO, SHIMADA. IT'S GREAT!
I'M EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT I KNOW THIS STUFF...
WE'D ALL LIKE TO TRY, TOO!
HE'S STILL LEARNING?!
H-HE'S JUST AN AMATEUR! THE GUY DOESN'T KNOW A FRACTION OF WHAT I DO!


THOSE IDIOTS WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE IMPRESSED IF I DID SOMETHIN' ON SHIMADA'S LEVEL...SOMETHIN' EVEN THEY CAN UNDERSTAND. THEN THEY'D SEE ME AS A MASTER OF COMPUTERS.
THE PROBLEM IS, THESE GUYS DON'T KNOW SQUAT ABOUT COMPUTERS. I COULD GET ALL TECHNICAL WITH 'EM, BUT THEY WOULDN'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT I WAS SAYING.

HUH?
HEY, EVERYONE! FUJI-MOTO'S CALLIN' US!


THE NEXT DAY

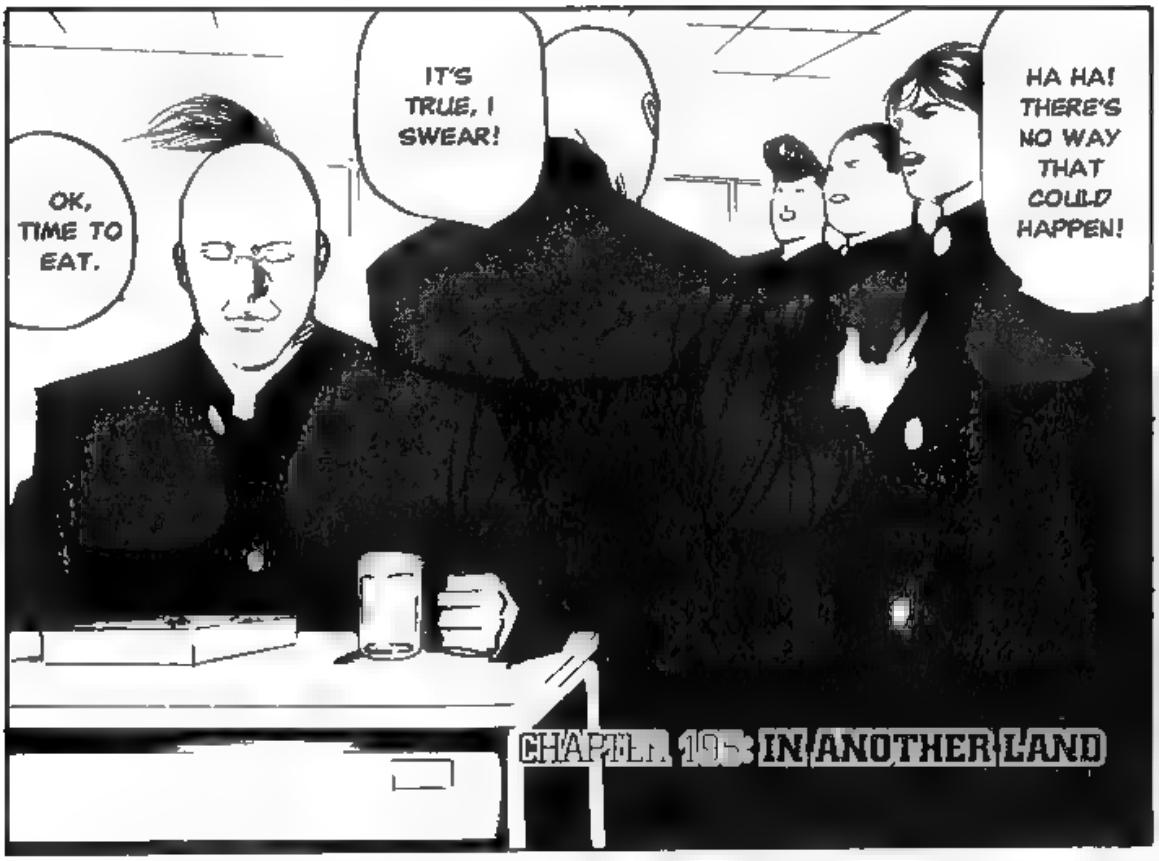

THERE'S JUST ONE THING TO DO.
WELL THEN.

WH-WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
WHAT IS THAT?

JUST SHUT UP AND WATCH.

SOK
SOK
SHP
HE'S GOT NO SHIRT ON!
SHSH
P-CHAK
Memory
SHP
KRKK
HNGH!

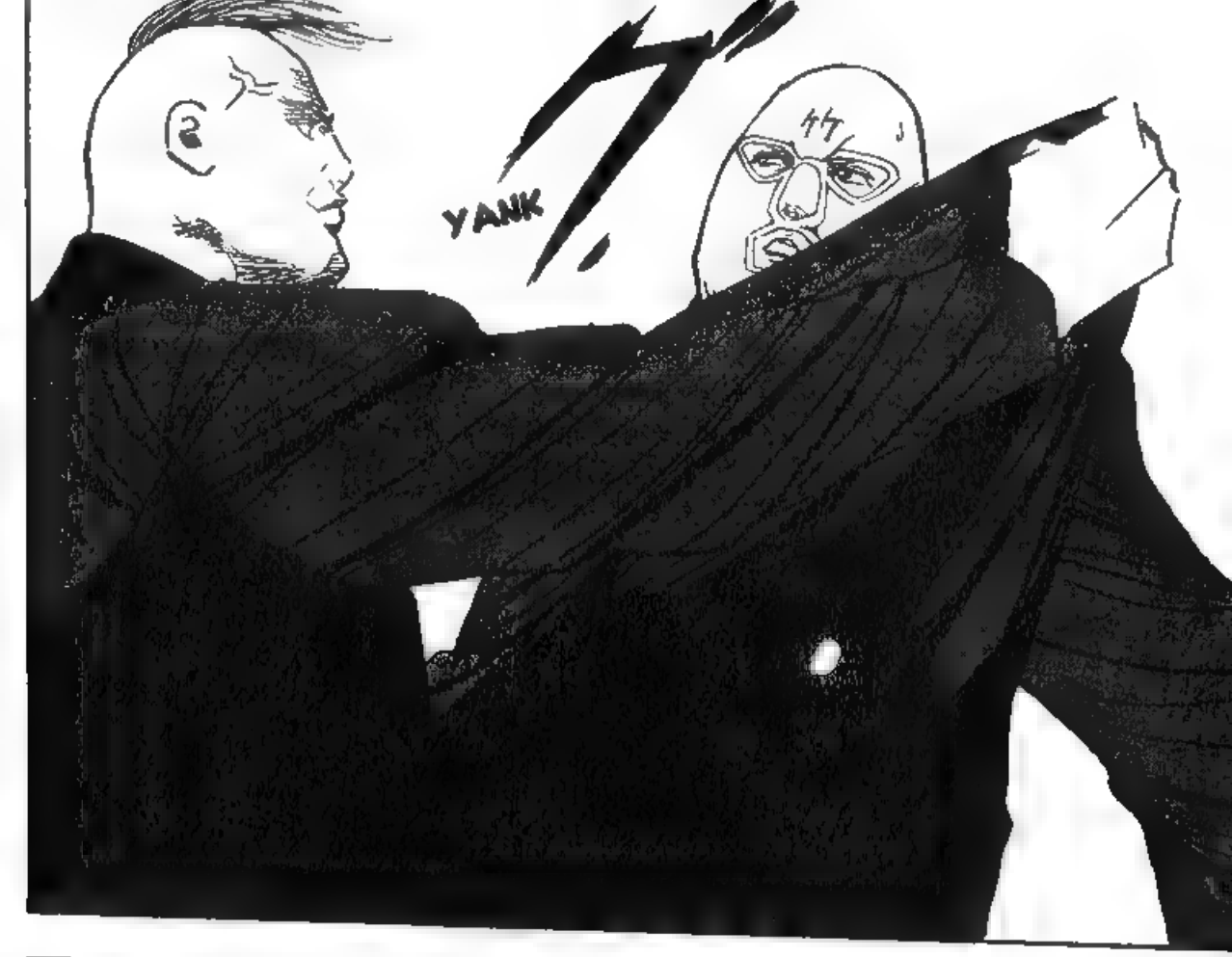
MEMORY UPGRADE: INCOMPLETE.

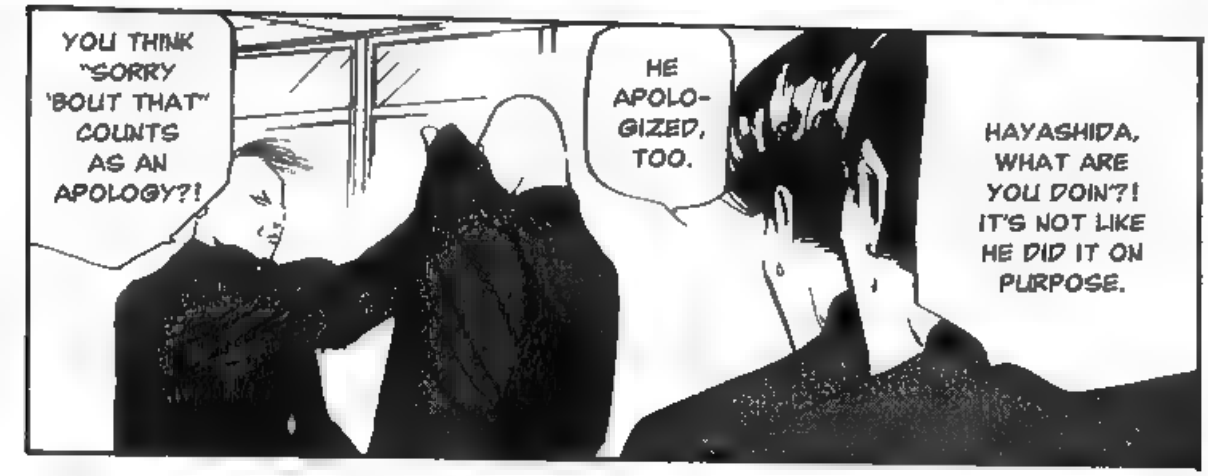

OK, TIME TO EAT.
IT'S TRUE, I SWEAR!
HA HA! THERE'S NO WAY THAT COULD HAPPEN!
CHAPTER 195: IN ANOTHER LAND

AH!
THOMP
SPSSH
Ha ha!

HUH?

OH. SORRY 'BOUT THAT, HAYASHIDA.


YANK

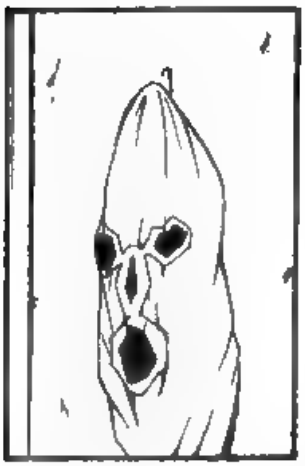

YOU THINK "SORRY 'BOUT THAT" COUNTS AS AN APOLOGY?!
HE APOLO-GIZED, TOO.
HAYASHIDA, WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'?! IT'S NOT LIKE HE DID IT ON PURPOSE.

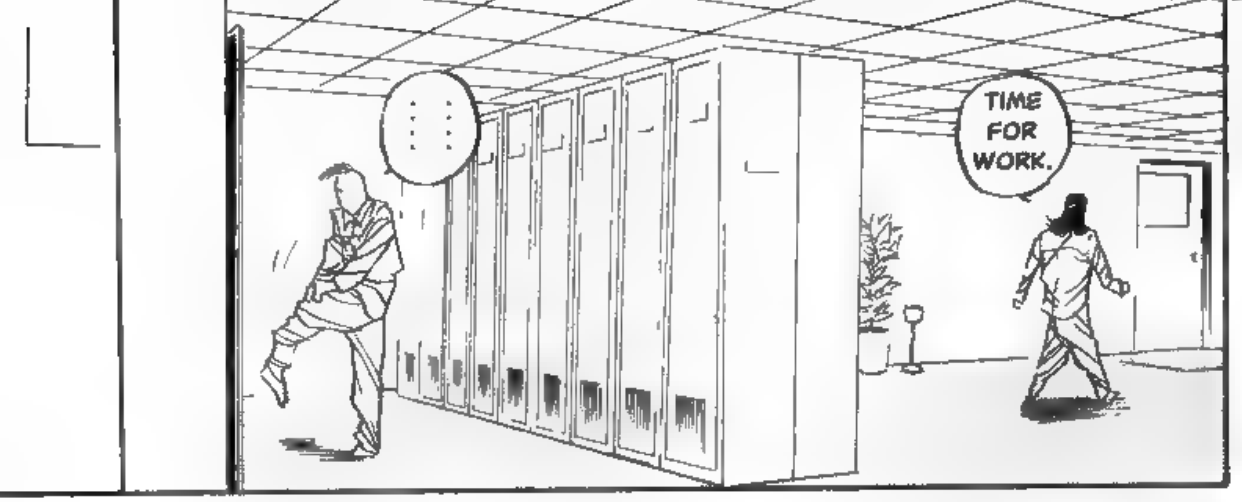
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? YOU WANT ME TO GET ON MY HANDS AND KNEES, IS THAT IT?
SMACK

I'M ONLY GONNA SAY THIS ONCE, SO LISTEN UP. TO ME, NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHEN IT COMES TIME TO EAT.
YEAH, WHAT GIVES?
WHY ARE YOU SO MAD? THIS AIN'T LIKE YOU.
HMPH! I WOULDN'T EXPECT A WEIRDO LIKE YOU TO UNDERSTAND.
HELL NO, THEY DON'T. AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT ELSE--EATING IS ONE TIME I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT.
IT'S SPECIAL, AND I DON'T WANT ANYBODY MESSIN' WITH ME. EVERYONE'S GOT A TIME LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
JEEZ
WHAT WAS THAT?!
I CAN'T BE A-ROUND THIS IDIOT.
STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU!
AND YOU'RE NOT? NICE MOHAWK.
WALKIN' AROUND WITH THAT MASK ON...YOU'RE JUST AFTER ATTENTION.
MOVERS, INC.
REALTOR

CHANGING ROOM
(PART-TIMERS ONLY)

ATTENTION PART-TIMERS:
Please remove necklaces
and all other accessories
before beginning your shift.

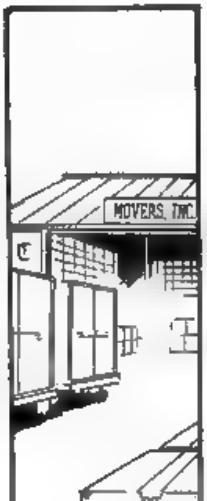



TIME FOR WORK.

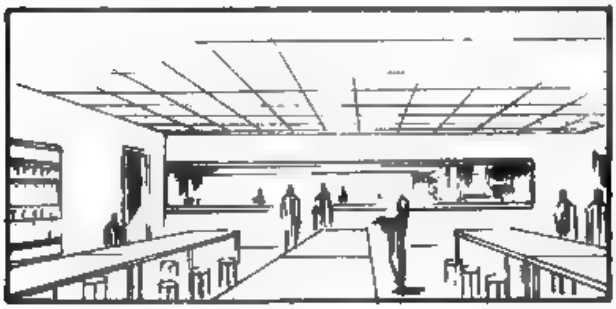
ATTENTION PART-TIMERS:
Please remove necklaces and all other accessories before beginning your shift.

WELL, TIME FOR WORK.

MORNING!
GOOD MORNING, SIR.
G'MORNING! GIVE IT YOUR ALL TODAY, HUH?


MOVERS, INC.

HA HA
THIS SIDE UP
TH-THANKS.
YOU TWO REALLY WORK WELL TOGETHER. YOU'RE PRACTICALLY TWINS!



EMPLOYEE CAFETERIA

GRRR

AH!
THOMP
SPSSH

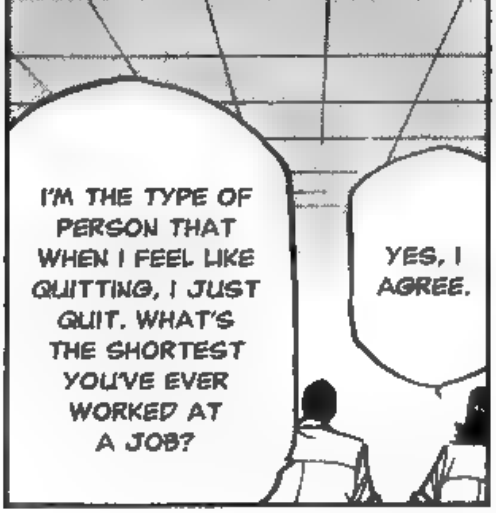
CHK
CHK

HM?

NO, THAT'S NOT NECES-SARY.
AT LEAST LET ME BUY YOU SOME TEA TO MAKE UP FOR IT.
CHNNG
IT'S FINE, REALLY. ANYWAY, THESE ARE JUST WORK CLOTHES.
OH, NO! I'M SO SORRY! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER THIS WHOLE TIME WITHOUT KNOWING EACH OTHER'S NAMES.
WE HAVEN'T INTRO-DUCED OUR-SELVES YET, HAVE WE?
UM...
HAYASHIDA...
HA HA! YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT. ANYWAY, MY NAME'S HAYASHIDA.
THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH A LOT OF PART-TIMERS, ISN'T IT? IT'S HARD TO FIND THE RIGHT TIME TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF.
SASU-KE?
THAT'S WHY HERE, THEY CALL ME SASUKE.
AAH. WELL, IT'S A PRETTY COMMON NAME. THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE OTHER HAYASHIDAS THAT WORK HERE.
HAYASHIDA-SAN, IS IT? YOU KNOW, THERE'S A HAYASHIDA THAT GOES TO MY SCHOOL.

CLATTER
CLATTER
WELL, THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH NICKNAMES.
YEAH, I'M NOT REALLY SURE HOW THAT NICKNAME GOT STARTED. IT JUST SORT OF HAPPENED.
IT'S JUST AN ALIAS, THOUGH.
OH, I'M SORRY! I COMPLETELY FORGOT TO ASK! WELL, IT'S NICE TO FINALLY MEET YOU.
BY THE WAY, I'M SUZUKI.
I CERTAINLY APPRECIATE IT. IT'S VERY MATURE OF YOU, HAYASHIDA-SAN.
WELL, I'M SURE YOU HAVE YOUR REASONS. DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT GOING TO PRY.
AN ALIAS...
AH. I SUPPOSE THAT MAKES ME SLIGHTLY OLDER.
HA HA! SERIOUSLY, FEEL FREE TO CALL ME SASUKE. AND I'M A 1ST YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL.
BUT IF YOU'RE OLDER THAN ME, IT WOULD BE RUDE NOT TO CALL YOU "-SAN." IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKING, HOW OLD ARE YOU?
PLEASE, JUST CALL ME SASUKE.

CLATTER
CLATTER
REALLY? WELL, I GUESS I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT.
OH, YOU'RE OLDER? THEN PLEASE, FEEL FREE TO SPEAK CASUALLY.
AAH, THERE'S NOTHING I ENJOY MORE THAN SITTING DOWN TO EAT.
HA HA! SUIT YOUR-SELF.
YOU KNOW, I THINK I'LL STICK TO FORMALITIES, IF YOU DON'T MIND. AFTER ALL, WE JOINED AT MORE OR LESS THE SAME TIME, AND HAVEN'T KNOWN EACH OTHER VERY LONG.
QUITE RIGHT.
WELL, TO EACH HIS OWN.
ACTUALLY, NO.
SOME TIMES ARE JUST SPECIAL, DON'T YOU THINK?
NO COMPLAINTS. BUT IF WE HAVE TO DO OVERTIME, I END UP MISSING THE BUS, WHICH MAKES GETTING HOME A LITTLE EXPENSIVE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE JOB SO FAR, SUZUKI-SAN?
SO...

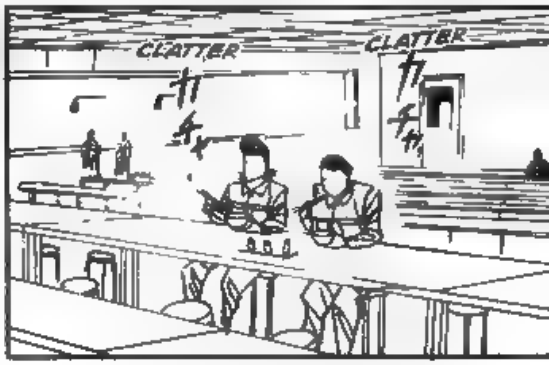

I'M THE TYPE OF PERSON THAT WHEN I FEEL LIKE QUITTING, I JUST QUIT. WHAT'S THE SHORTEST YOU'VE EVER WORKED AT A JOB?
YES, I AGREE.

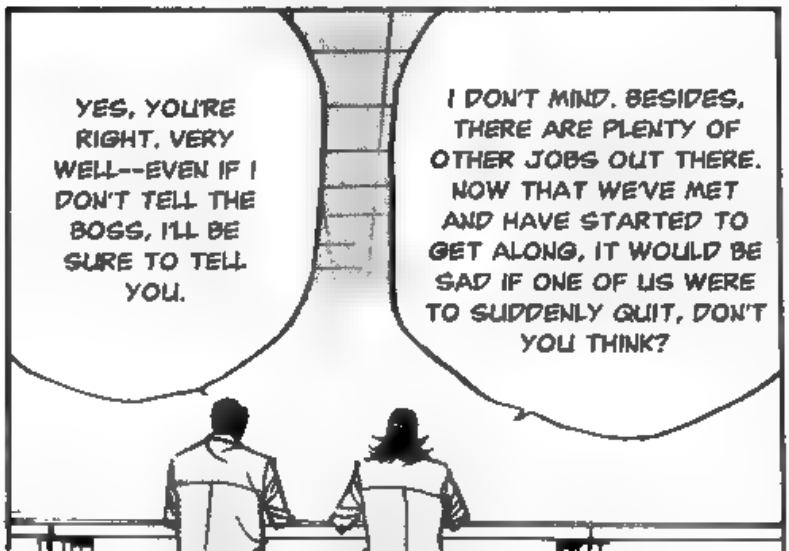
I DON'T HAVE ANY REAL PROBLEMS, EITHER. OUR BOSS IS A LITTLE STRICT, THOUGH.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SASUKE-SAN?

WELL, ONE TIME I WENT ON MY LUNCH BREAK AND NEVER CAME BACK. I FELT RATHER BAD ABOUT THAT...
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

THE SHORTEST? MMM, I'VE QUIT AFTER TWO DAYS BEFORE.

SASUKE-SAN...IF YOU DECIDE TO QUIT THIS JOB, WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME?


CLATTER
CLATTER


YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. VERY WELL--EVEN IF I DON'T TELL THE BOSS, I'LL BE SURE TO TELL YOU.
I DON'T MIND. BESIDES, THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER JOBS OUT THERE. NOW THAT WE'VE MET AND HAVE STARTED TO GET ALONG, IT WOULD BE SAD IF ONE OF US WERE TO SUDDENLY QUIT, DON'T YOU THINK?

WHAT? BUT IF WE BOTH QUIT AT THE SAME TIME, I DON'T THINK THEY'D BE TOO HAPPY.
I'LL QUIT WITH YOU.

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I CHANGE THE SUBJECT, BUT...
MY FRIEND AND I GOT INTO A PRETTY BIG FIGHT...
REALLY? SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED TO ME AT MY SCHOOL, TOO!
SOMETHING HAPPENED AT MY SCHOOL RECENTLY. IT WAS SIMILAR TO THAT INCIDENT EARLIER, WHEN I SPILLED YOUR TEA.
.....
IN MY CASE, THE OTHER PERSON WAS ACTUALLY A VERY NICE GUY. IN FACT, I'D HAVE TO SAY HE'S MY BEST FRIEND IN THE WHOLE SCHOOL.
I SEE. I SUPPOSE WE'VE ALL BEEN THROUGH SIMILAR EXPERIENCES. IT JUST SEEMS SO FOOLISH NOW.
SAME HERE. WE WERE BOTH SO STUBBORN, NEITHER OF US WOULD BACK DOWN.
.....
AS SOON AS I SEE HIM TOMORROW, I'M GOING TO APOLOGIZE.
THAT'S WHY...

NO. I'D HAVE TO SAY THAT I'M THE LUCKY ONE.
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, SUZUKI-SAN. YOUR FRIEND'S A LUCKY PERSON.
OF COURSE, I MAY END UP GETTING EMBARRASSED AND NOT BE ABLE TO SAY WHAT I MEAN. HEH.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR FRIEND? DO YOU THINK HE'S REALLY A GOOD PERSON, TOO?
YES. I'D HAVE TO SAY I AGREE.
I HONESTLY THINK THAT DEEP DOWN, NO ONE IS TRULY "BAD."
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
CLATTER
CLATTER
. . . . . .
OH...
NO, PROBABLY NOT.

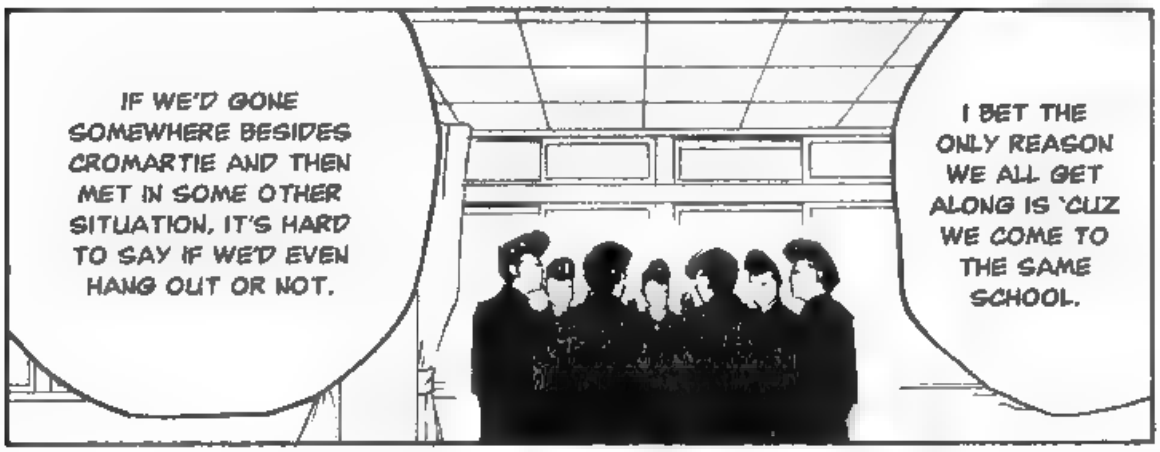
WHICH ONE OF THEM IS THE BIGGER IDIOT?

CHAPTER 196: **DEAR FRIEND**

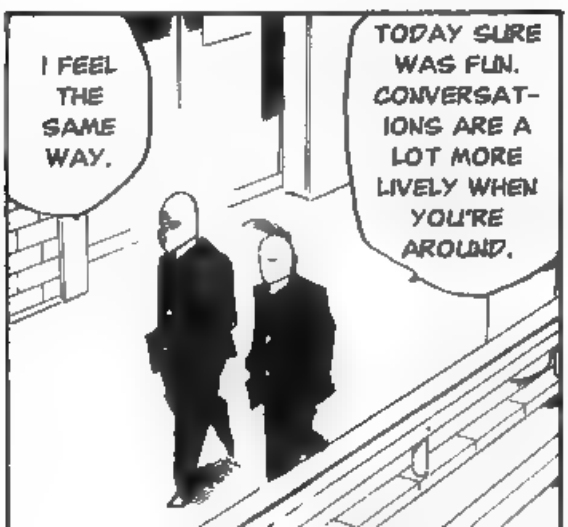
NAH, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S AWESOME!
MAN, YOU'RE AWESOME, MASK!
C'MON, STOP. YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT? YOU'RE THE NICEST GUY I EVER MET!
YOU'RE TELLIN' ME. THEY WERE GOIN' AT IT LIKE CATS AND DOGS BEFORE, BUT NOW...
THOSE GUYS SURE DO GET ALONG, HUH?
SAME HERE.
I SURE AM GLAD I MET YOU.

YEAH. I MEAN, I GOT PEOPLE I CALL FRIENDS, BUT NO ONE I COULD SAY IS A **TRUE** FRIEND.

SEEIN' THE WAY THEY GET ALONG MAKES ME WISH I HAD A FRIEND LIKE THAT.

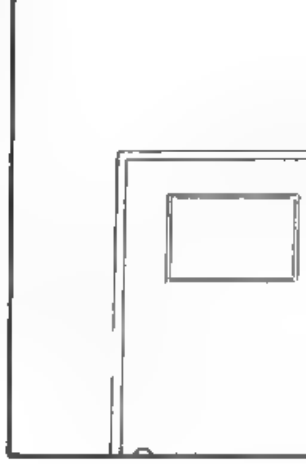
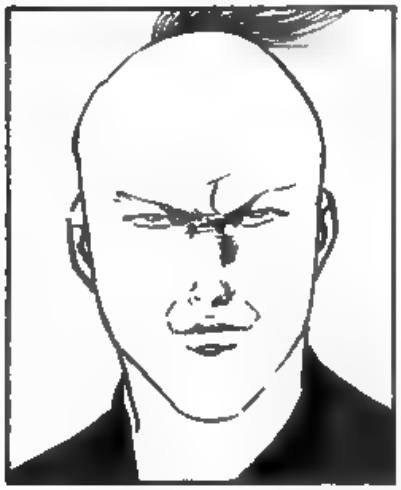
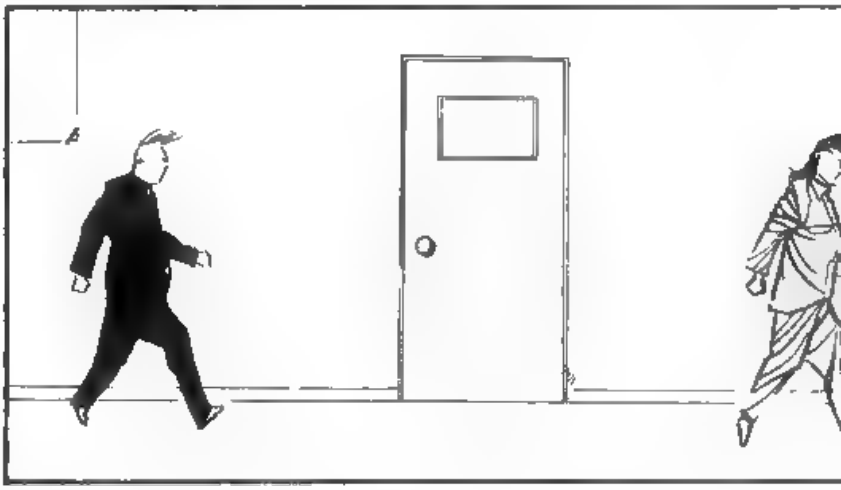

IF WE'D GONE SOMEWHERE BESIDES CROMARTIE AND THEN MET IN SOME OTHER SITUATION, IT'S HARD TO SAY IF WE'D EVEN HANG OUT OR NOT.
I BET THE ONLY REASON WE ALL GET ALONG IS 'CUZ WE COME TO THE SAME SCHOOL.

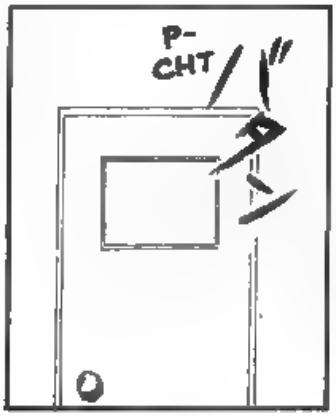
BUT THOSE GUYS ARE DIFFERENT. I BET EVEN IF THEY'D MET SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE THIS SCHOOL, THEY STILL WOULD'VE TURNED OUT TO BE FRIENDS.
HEH HEH
HA HA


I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
TODAY SURE WAS FUN. CONVERSATIONS ARE A LOT MORE LIVELY WHEN YOU'RE AROUND.

TAKE A GOOD LOOK. THAT'S REAL FRIENDSHIP RIGHT THERE.
I'M PRETTY JEALOUS.

I THINK SO, TOO. IF WE'D MET SOMEWHERE ELSE, I BET I WOULDN'T HAVE MADE FRIENDS WITH ANYONE BUT YOU.
Y'KNOW, I THINK EVEN IF WE'D MET OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL, WE STILL WOULD'VE TURNED OUT TO BE FRIENDS.
OH. WELL, WE'LL DO IT NEXT TIME. ACTUALLY, I HAVE TO GO TO WORK, TOO.
SORRY, I CAN'T. I HAVE TO GO TO WORK.
GREAT IDEA! HEY, LET'S GO NOW!
WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GO GRAB A DRINK SOMETIME SOON?
MOVERS, INC.
SEE YOU.
BYE.
K-CHAK
CHANGING ROOM (PART-TIMERS ONLY)

K-CHAK




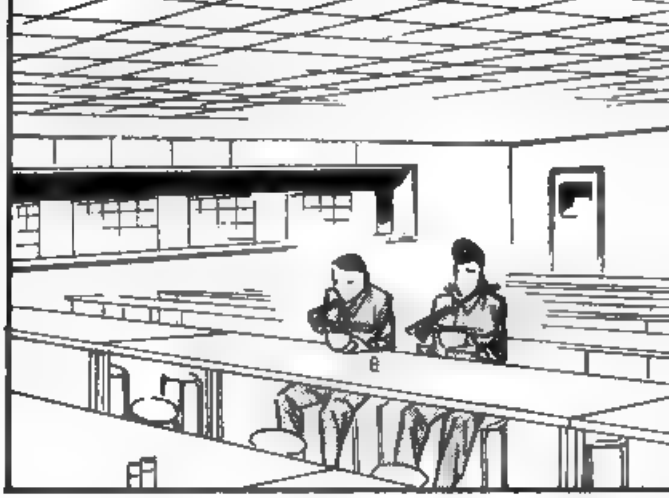
K-CHAK

P-
CHT

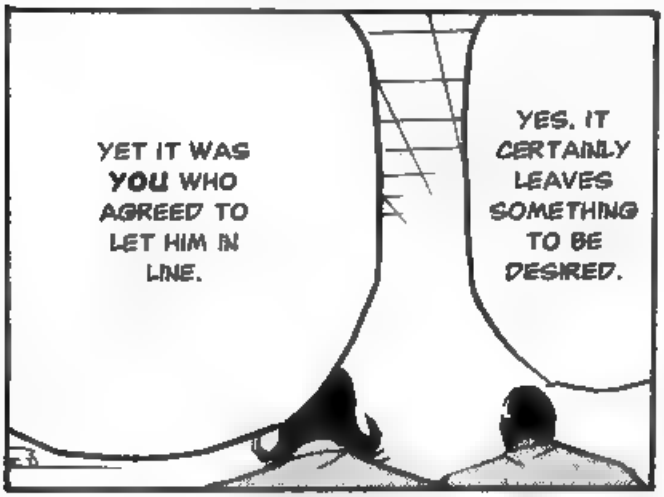
K-CHAK

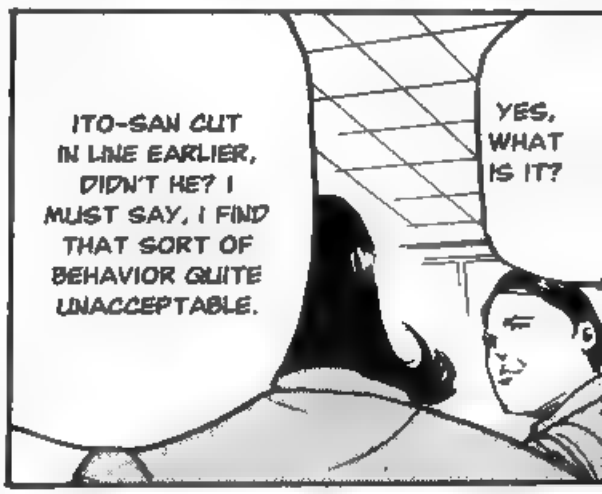
EMPLOYEE CAFETERIA

AH, ITO-SAN!
HEY, SASUKE! HOW YOU DOIN'?
YES, IT IS.
THE CAFETERIA CERTAINLY IS CROWDED TODAY.
YEAH. IT SURE IS CROWDED IN HERE TODAY, HUH?
BECAUSE THEY KEPT CHANGING PITCH-ERS.
YOU SEE THE GAME LAST NIGHT? THE GIANTS LOST!
Ito
UH, NO.
SAY, D'YOU MIND?
Ito

SASUKE-SAN, MAY I ASK YOU SOMETHING?




YET IT WAS **YOU** WHO AGREED TO LET HIM IN LINE.
YES. IT CERTAINLY LEAVES SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED.


ITO-SAN CUT IN LINE EARLIER, DIDN'T HE? I MUST SAY, I FIND THAT SORT OF BEHAVIOR QUITE UNACCEPTABLE.
YES, WHAT IS IT?

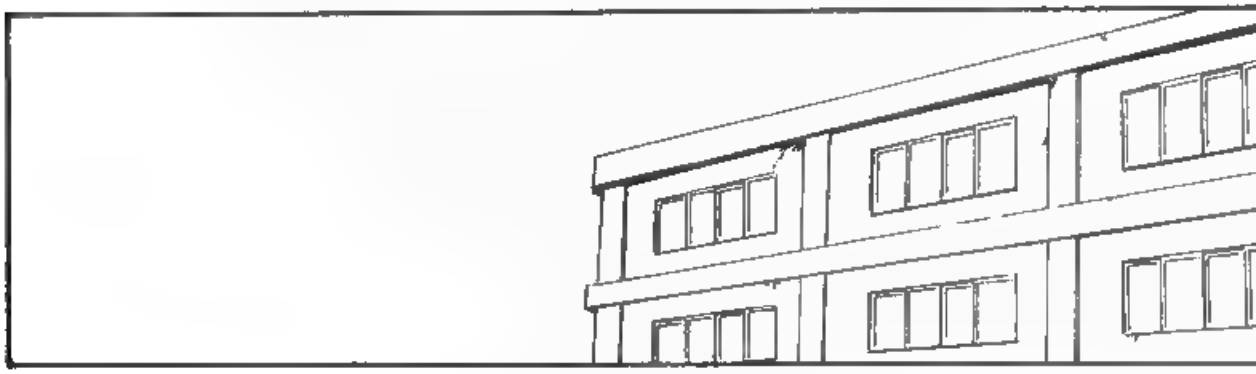
I'M NOT SO SURE...
ITO-SAN IS MY BOSS. I CAN'T VERY WELL SAY, "SORRY, BUT NO."

. . . . . .

IF ITO-SAN HAD ASKED YOU, WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAY, "SORRY, PLEASE GO TO THE BACK OF THE LINE"?
WELL THEN, ALLOW ME TO POSE THIS QUESTION TO YOU.

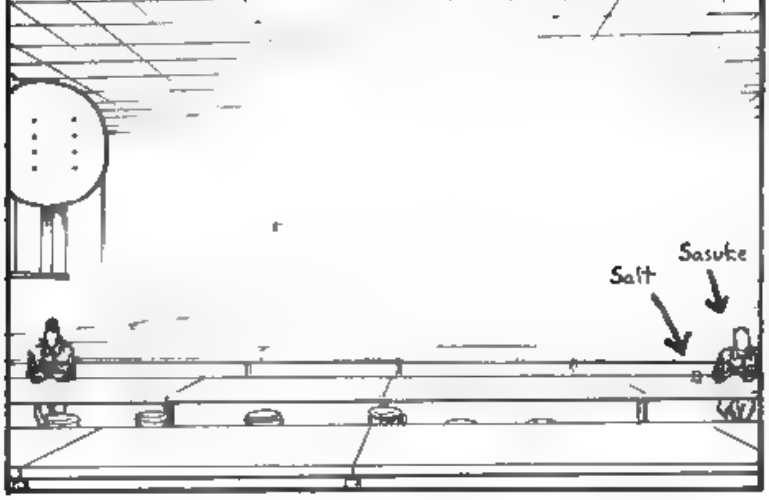
THE THING IS, YOU CAN SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW HIM. I, ON THE OTHER HAND, AM CLOSE ENOUGH TO HIM THAT I ALREADY COUNT HIM AS A GOOD FRIEND. THAT MAKES THINGS SOMEWHAT HARDER, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
OH, YES. BUT I WOULD DO IT SUBTLY, IN A WAY THAT WOULDN'T CAUSE TROUBLE.
BUT CAN YOU TRULY CALL THEM FRIENDS? IS IT NECESSARY TO CODDLE ONE'S FRIENDS? A TRUE FRIEND SHOULD BE DEALT WITH STERNLY WHEN CALLED FOR.
YOU'LL PARDON ME IF I'M BEING BLUNT, BUT I HAVE MORE FRIENDS HERE THAN JUST YOU.
I MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT I'VE ALREADY MADE MORE THAN A FEW ACQUAIN-TANCES.
AH. I'VE GONE TOO FAR. MY APOLOGIES.
. . . . . .
THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. THIS MAY NOT BE THE BEST WAY OF PUTTING IT. BUT I'M THE ONLY FRIEND YOU'VE MADE HERE, AREN'T I?
HMPH. NOW YOU'VE SHOWN YOUR TRUE COLORS, HAVEN'T YOU? FOR ALL YOUR TALK OF DROPPING THE FORMALITIES, YOU BECOME DEFENSIVE WHEN I DO SO. AS OF NOW, WE ARE STRANGERS--WE SHOULD HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER.
SORRY, BUT WOULD YOU MIND NOT CALLING ME THAT?
"-KUN"?!
YOU'VE CHANGED, SASUKE-KUN.

CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER

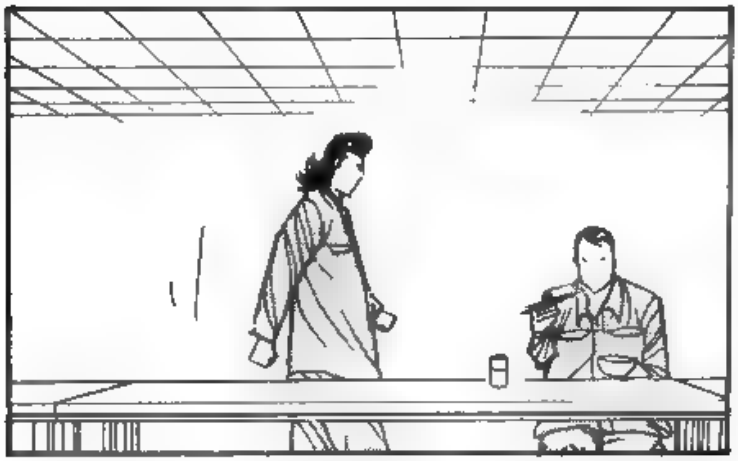


NO WAY! IF ANYONE'S GONNA GO DOWN AS THE GREATEST GUY EVER, IT'S YOU!
I'M TELLIN' YA, YOU'RE THE GREATEST GUY WHO'S EVER LIVED!

WHOA, I WAS ABOUT TO SAY THE SAME THING! LIVE OR DIE, WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!
YOU WON'T FIND TWO PEOPLE CLOSER THAN US! WE'RE PRACTICALLY BROTHERS! HELL, WE COULD EVEN MOVE IN TOGETHER!
YEAH. LIKE THEY'RE SO CLOSE THAT THEY CAN'T SHUT UP ABOUT IT.
THEY'RE ALMOST... STRANGELY CLOSE.
I KNOW I'M REPEATIN' MYSELF, BUT IT MUST BE NICE TO HAVE SUCH A CLOSE FRIEND.
OF COURSE!
FRIENDS FOR LIFE, MAN!
MOVERS, INC.
CLATTER カチャ
CLATTER カチャ


Salt
Sasuke

HMM, WHERE'S THE SALT?



I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO OVER THERE AND GET IT...

AH!
SWISH

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! I JUST WANTED TO USE THE SALT!
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO SINK SO LOW?

UH...

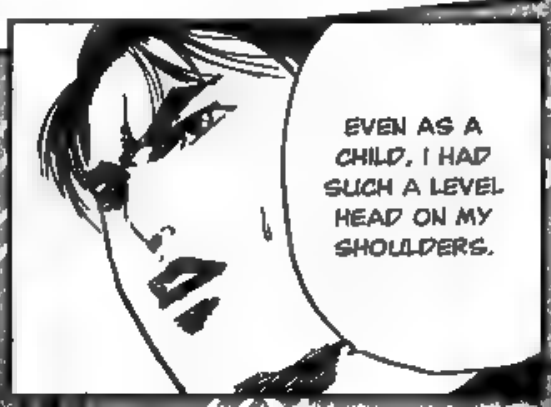
OH, NOTHING.
WHAT WAS THAT?!
I SWEAR. ANYONE WHO'D TRY TO START A FIGHT OVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS SUCH A CHILD.
SHP SHP
THOMP
AGH!
I DON'T WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU EVER AGAIN!
WELL I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
SORRY. YOU WERE IN THE WAY.
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
YEAH, LET'S GO!
YOU WANT TO GRAB SOMETHING TO EAT?
I'M SO JEAL-OUS.
THOSE TWO SURE ARE CLOSE.
REALLY?! I GOT PAID YESTERDAY, TOO!
HAYASHIDA! I GOT PAID YESTERDAY, SO LET'S GO OUT DRINKING!

THEY'LL PROBABLY NEVER FIGURE IT OUT.

Writings From Elementary School

My Dream for the Future
By Takashi Kamiyama

My dream for the future is to become an upstanding member of society. There is much suffering in this world, and I want to be able to help. To do that, I think I should become a government official. The people's taxes would pay for my salary, so I in turn could work for the people. It also looks like a job where I could occasionally slack off, which is another reason for me to try it.



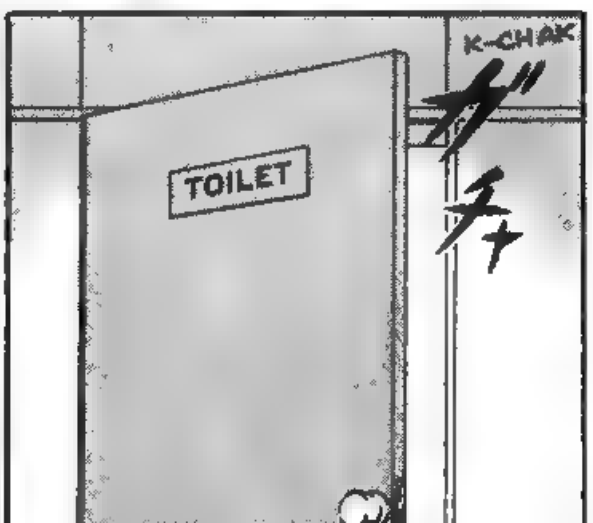
What I want to be when I grow up
By Shinjiro Hayashida

When I grow up, I want to be a frog. By the way, a frog is a reptile. I like frogs because they can jump through the air, like, poink poink. When tadpoles get bigger, they turn into frogs.

The end.

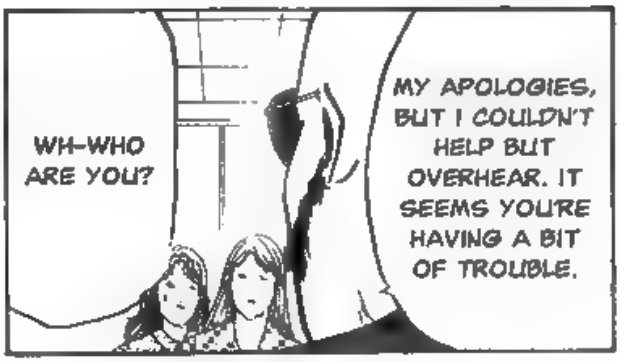
CHAPTER 197: **CRUSH ON YOU**

WOW, LET ME SEE! DID YOU, LIKE, SIGN UP FOR THE INTERNET?
LOOK, LOOK! I GOT A COMPUTER! HEH!
CAFÉ L'ICON
HUH? COME ON! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BOUGHT ONE TILL AFTER YOU KNEW HOW TO USE IT!
ACTUALLY, I DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT COMPU-TERS...
WELL, YOU SHOULD. AND SOON! ANYWAY, SHOW ME SOMETHING.
NO, NOT YET.
IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE YOU WISH SOMEONE WHO KNEW ABOUT COMPUTERS WAS AROUND, HUH?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?

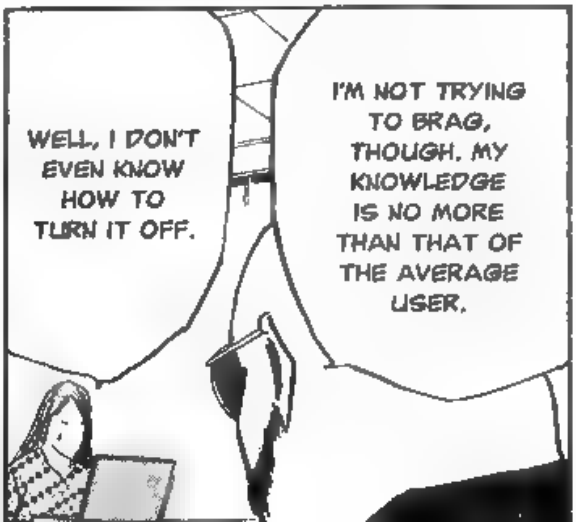


TOILET
SQUEAK
CALL ME SHIMADA.

REALLY? YOU, UM, YOU DON'T LOOK IT...
CALL ME SHIMADA. AND I HAPPEN TO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT COMPUTERS.

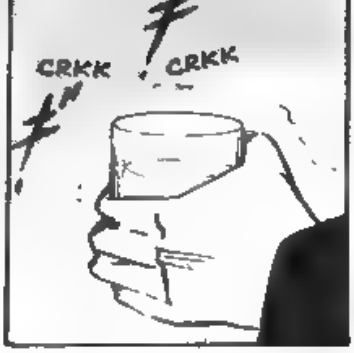

WH-WHO ARE YOU?
MY APOLOGIES, BUT I COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR. IT SEEMS YOU'RE HAVING A BIT OF TROUBLE.

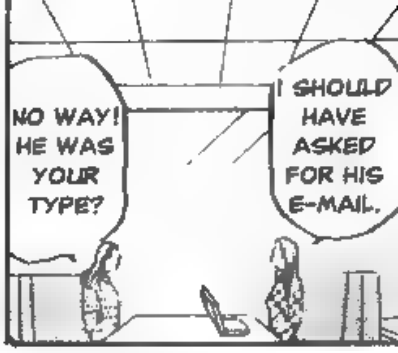
WAIT! A COMPUTER IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM, SAY, A TELEVISION.
OH, COME ON. JUST PRESS THE POWER BUTTON!

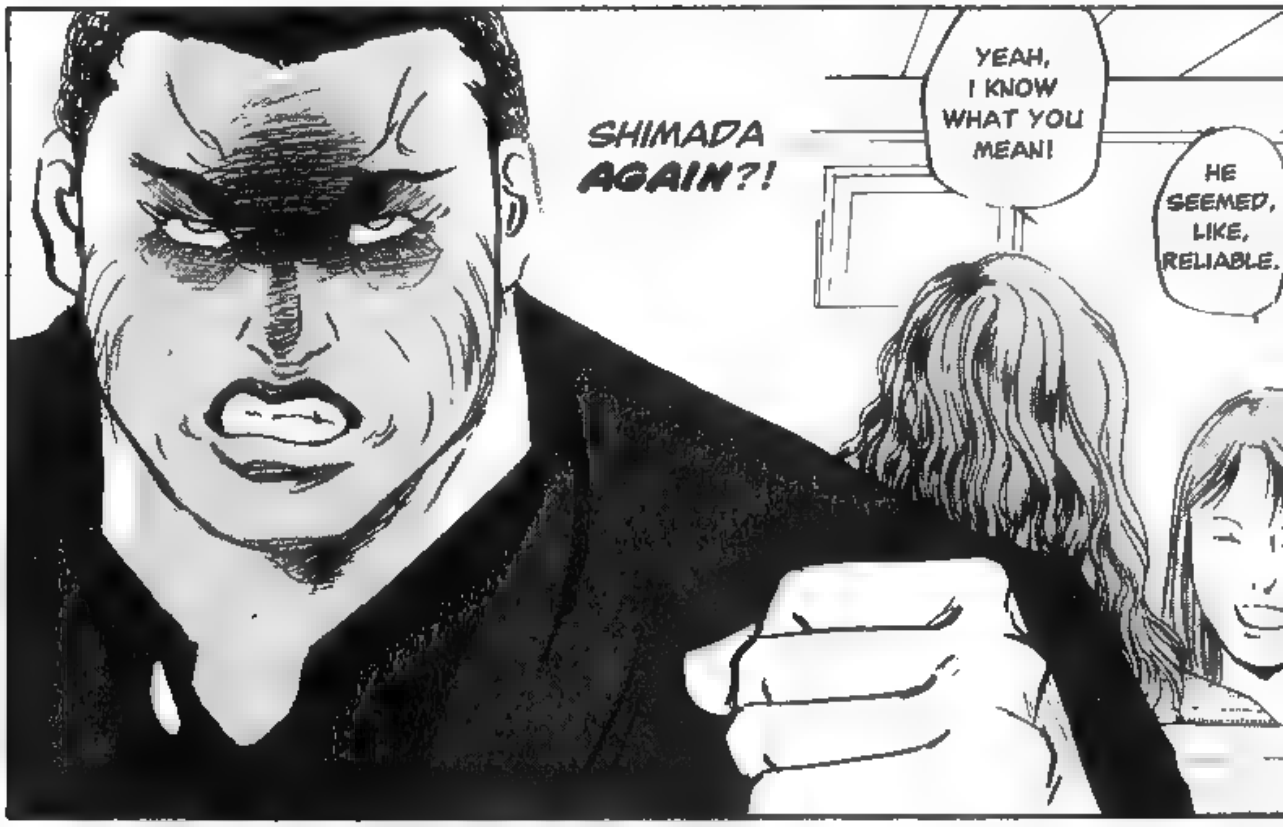

WELL, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO TURN IT OFF.
I'M NOT TRYING TO BRAG, THOUGH. MY KNOWLEDGE IS NO MORE THAN THAT OF THE AVERAGE USER.

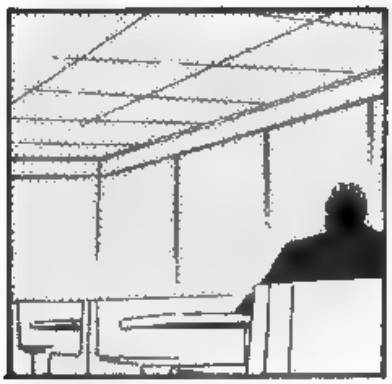
CLICK HERE, WHERE IT SAYS "START."
SO WHAT DO WE DO?
REALLY? YEAH, I KIND OF FIGURED...
PRESSING THE POWER BUTTON TO TURN OFF THE COMPUTER IS OVERLY SIMPLISTIC. YOU WOULD DO WELL TO CLEAR YOUR MIND OF SUCH THINKING.
MY WORK IS DONE.
OH MY GOD! THAT'S INCREDIBLE!
WOW! IT TURNED OFF!
CLICK THIS, AND...
BZT
DOING SO WILL BRING UP THE SHUT-DOWN OPTION.
CALL ME SHIMADA.
I'M NO ONE SPECIAL, SO MY NAME IS NOT IMPORTANT. HOWEVER, AS I PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED...
WAIT! WON'T YOU AT LEAST TELL US YOUR NAME?
YEAH. BUT HE LOOKED LIKE HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THEM. WHICH MADE HIM EVEN COOLER!
PEOPLE WHO CAN USE COMPUTERS ARE SO COOL!
JINGLE

SKRASSH!

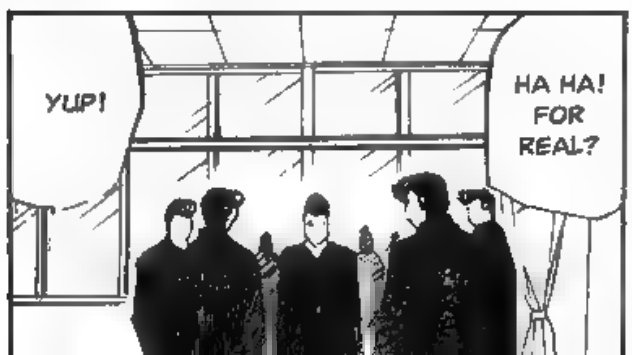

CRKK
CRKK


NO WAY! HE WAS YOUR TYPE?
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED FOR HIS E-MAIL.


SHIMADA AGAIN?!
YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN!
HE SEEMED, LIKE, RELIABLE.



HE ACTS ALL SMUG, SHOWING OFF HIS HALF-ASSED KNOWLEDGE TO A BUNCH OF AMATEURS... BASTARD!
THAT SON OF A BITCH IS ASKING FOR IT!

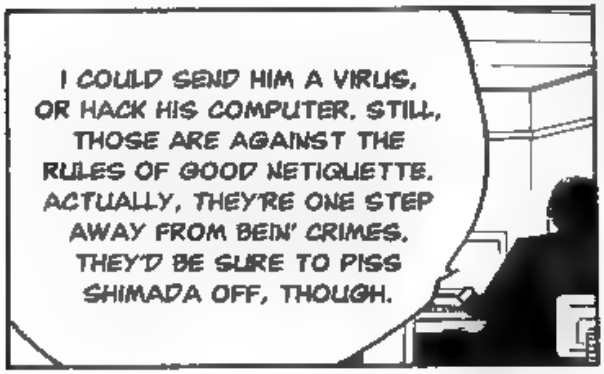

YUP!
HA HA! FOR REAL?

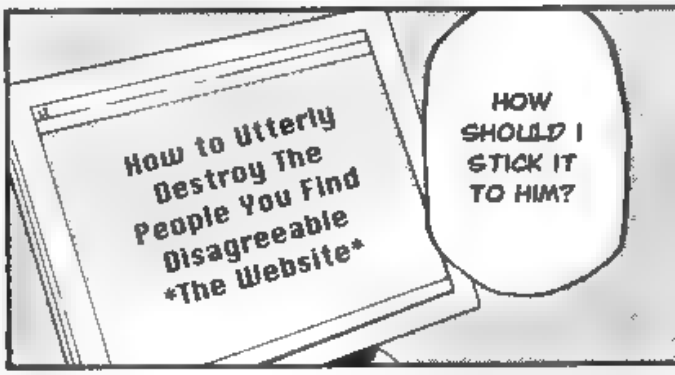
HE FITS IN SO GREAT, YOU'D NEVER THINK HE WAS A TRANSFER STUDENT!
EVERY-THING'S FINE.
HOW'S THAT SHIMADA GUY WORKIN' OUT?
SO ANYWAY, TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT...
MAN, THAT'S JUST SCARY!
YEAH. HIM AND FUJIMOTO MAKE ONE HELL OF A ONE-TWO PUNCH!
I HEAR HE'S REALLY GOOD IN A FIGHT, TOO. I GUESS WE'VE MADE OURSELVES A POWERFUL NEW FRIEND, HUH?
SHIMADA'S A DEAD MAN.
AIN'T THAT RIGHT, FUJIMOTO?

. . . . . .
CLICK
. . .
RATTLE
THAT'S ALL.
SNIP

FUJIMOTO'S GONNA STICK IT TO HIM?! HOW?
HE SAID SHIMADA'S A DEAD MAN!
HE WAS BEIN' SERIOUS!

NOW THEN...

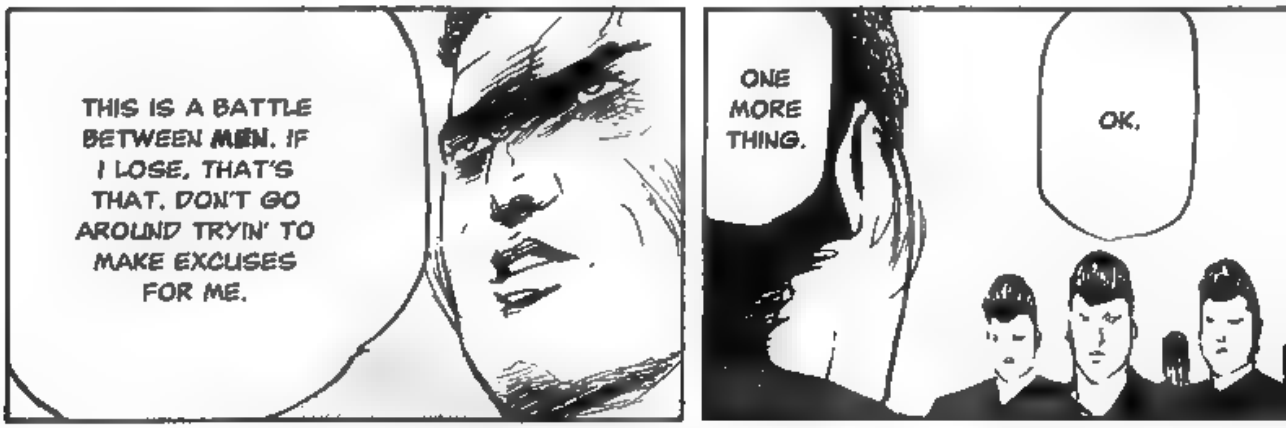

I COULD SEND HIM A VIRUS, OR HACK HIS COMPUTER. STILL, THOSE ARE AGAINST THE RULES OF GOOD NETIQUETTE. ACTUALLY, THEY'RE ONE STEP AWAY FROM BEIN' CRIMES. THEY'D BE SURE TO PISS SHIMADA OFF, THOUGH.


How to Utterly Destroy The People You Find Disagreeable *The Website*
HOW SHOULD I STICK IT TO HIM?

I'M GONNA MAKE SURE HE'LL NEVER WANT TO GO NEAR A COMPUTER AGAIN! HEH HEH.
WHATEVER IT TAKES...

WHY AM I GETTIN' SO WORKED UP OVER AN AMATEUR?
ACTUAL-LY...
. . . .
WHEN IT COMES TO COMPUTERS!
IT'S TIME TO ONCE AND FOR ALL SETTLE THE QUESTION OF WHICH ONE OF US IS STRONGER...
THERE'S NO NEED TO LET IT GET TO ME. THE GUY'S NOTHING. HE CAN'T EVEN COME CLOSE!
What's a Proxy Seru
THE NEXT DAY
TELL HIM TO MEET ME BEHIND THE GYM.
CALL SHIMADA.

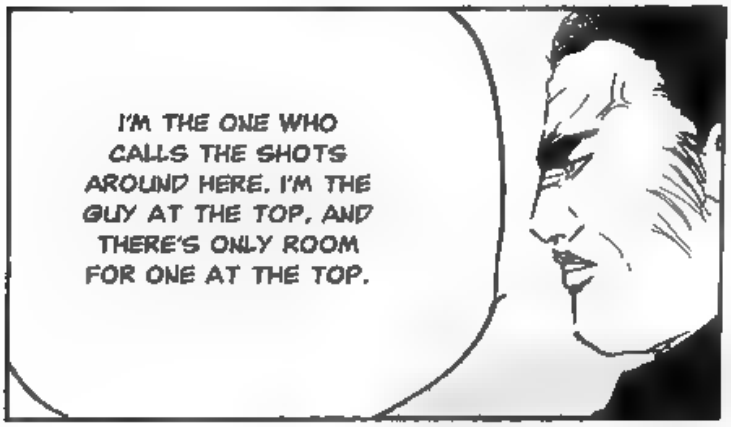
I'M SETTLIN' THIS MAN TO MAN, JUST HIM AND ME. YOU BASTARDS BETTER NOT GET INVOLVED.
ALRIGHT, LISTEN UP.
.....

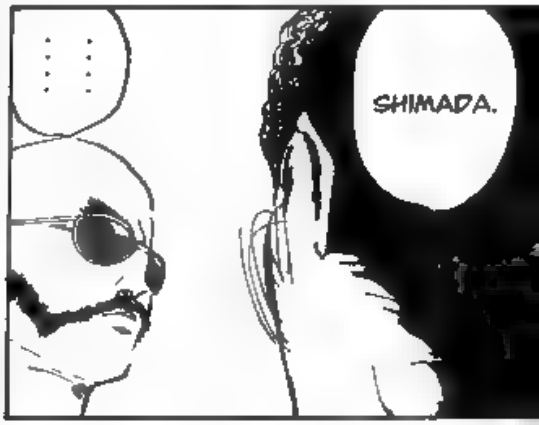

THIS IS A BATTLE BETWEEN **MEN**. IF I LOSE, THAT'S THAT. DON'T GO AROUND TRYIN' TO MAKE EXCUSES FOR ME.
ONE MORE THING.
OK.

UNTIL I SAY SO, NONE OF YOU ARE ALLOWED TO USE A COMPUTER. PERIOD.
ONE MORE THING.
OK.

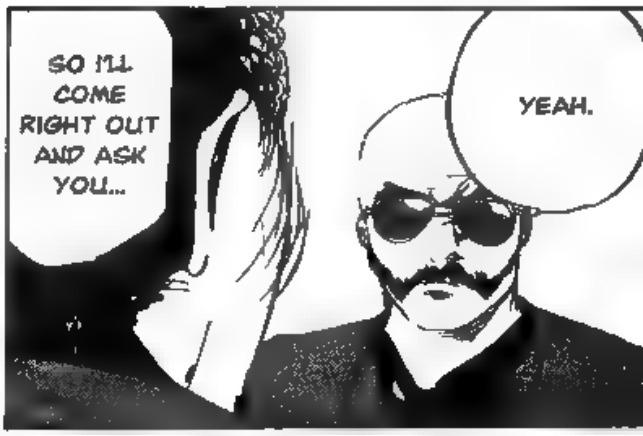
.....
RATTLE
THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO SAY. I'M GOIN' NOW.
OK.

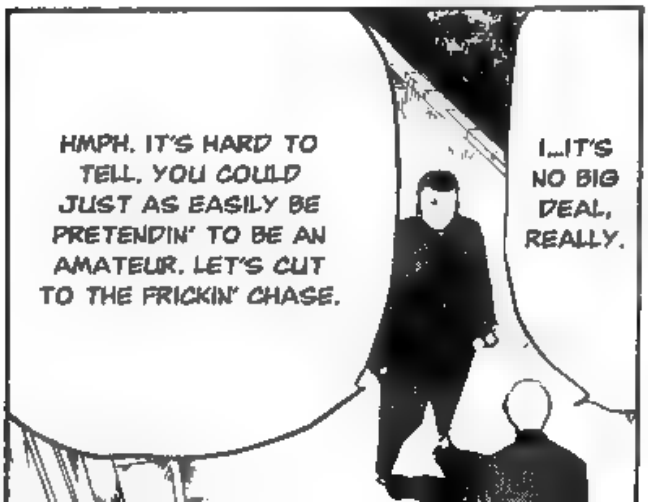
FIRST, THIS IS BETWEEN FUJIMOTO AND SHIMADA. WE CAN'T GO GETTIN' INVOLVED.
LET'S GO OVER IT REAL QUICK.
YEAH, OF COURSE.
DID YOU ALL HEAR WHAT FUJIMOTO SAID?
HEY.
IF FUJIMOTO LOSES, THEN THAT'S IT. WE HAVE TO ADMIT SHIMADA IS THE WINNER. STILL GOOD?
NEXT...
YEAH, GOT IT.
Makes sense.
NONE OF US CAN USE A COMPUTER TILL FUJIMOTO SAYS SO.
FINALLY...
YEAH, GOT IT.
That's Fujimoto for ya.
YOU DON'T GET IT, EITHER? I WAS GONNA ASK YOU ABOUT IT LATER!
YOU, TOO?
I TOTALLY DON'T UNDER-STAND!
.....


I'M THE ONE WHO CALLS THE SHOTS AROUND HERE. I'M THE GUY AT THE TOP, AND THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR ONE AT THE TOP.


SHIMADA.

HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT COMPUTERS?!


SO I'LL COME RIGHT OUT AND ASK YOU...
YEAH.

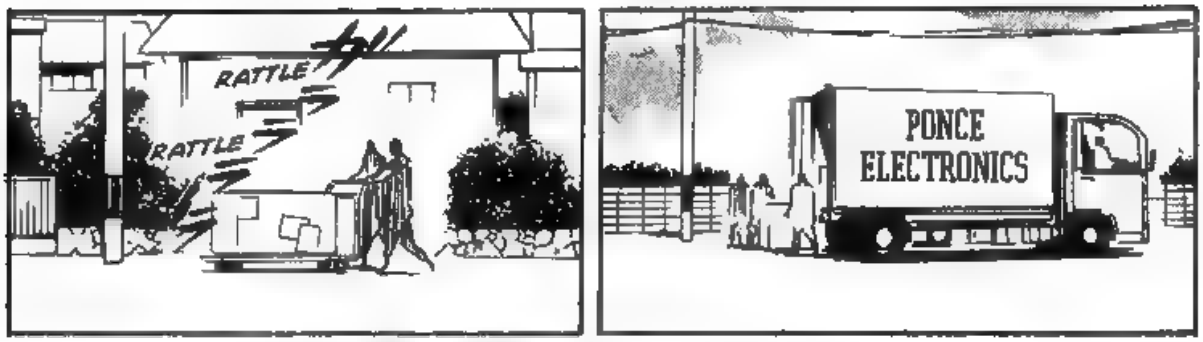

HMPH. IT'S HARD TO TELL. YOU COULD JUST AS EASILY BE PRETENDIN' TO BE AN AMATEUR. LET'S CUT TO THE FRICKIN' CHASE.
I...IT'S NO BIG DEAL, REALLY.

HUH?
YOU ACT ALL BIG, BUT IT'S ALWAYS IN FRONT OF PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW SQUAT.

WHAT, IN A FIGHT?
NO, NOT IN A FRIGGIN' FIGHT! WE'RE TALKIN' ABOUT COMPUTERS, DAMMIT! ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?!
WHAT'S SOMETHIN' YOU'VE GOT THAT NO ONE COULD EVER BEAT? LIKE A TECHNIQUE OR SOMETHIN'.
I'VE NEVER EVEN SET UP A FORUM BEFORE.
WELL I HAVE. AND I'M NOT TRYIN' TO BRAG OR ANYTHING, BUT I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD HANDLE ON CGI, TOO.
I DON'T THINK I'VE GOT ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
WAIT HERE.
HUH?
WHAT-EVER. SHOW ME.
HMM...THERE IS ONE THING I CAN DO. I WOULDN'T SAY I'M ESPECIALLY GOOD AT IT, THOUGH.
I'M BACK.
HM?
YOU'RE FULL OF YOURSELF NOW, BUT I'M ABOUT TO KNOCK YOU DOWN TO SIZE, SHIMADA.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST GONNA BE HOW TO SHUT DOWN YOUR COMPUTER OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.

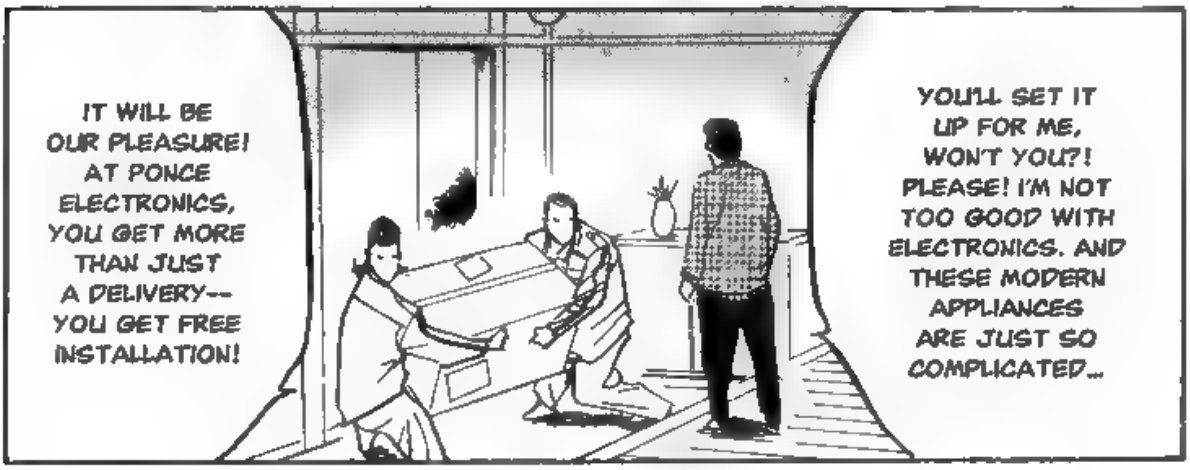
HE WOULDN'T HAVE LUGGED THAT THING FROM HOME, THOUGH.

CHAPTER 198: **WON'T BE LONG**



I AGREE. AND I MUST SAY, I'M GLAD TO BE WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN.
QUITTING OUR LAST JOB WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? THAT BOSS OF OURS WAS A LITTLE TOO DEMANDING.

SORRY, SIR. THERE WERE SEVERAL DELIVER-IES WE HAD TO DO FIRST.
YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE, DON'T YOU THINK? THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DELIVERED THIS MORNING. IT'S ALREADY 5:00!


IT WILL BE OUR PLEASURE! AT PONCE ELECTRONICS, YOU GET MORE THAN JUST A DELIVERY-- YOU GET FREE INSTALLATION!
YOU'LL SET IT UP FOR ME, WON'T YOU?! PLEASE! I'M NOT TOO GOOD WITH ELECTRONICS. AND THESE MODERN APPLIANCES ARE JUST SO COMPLICATED...

IT'S A DRAMA CALLED *THE WHITE GRAPE*, AND TONIGHT'S THE SERIES FINALE! I HAVEN'T MISSED A SINGLE EPISODE!
GOOD. NOW PLEASE HURRY! THERE'S A PROGRAM THAT COMES ON AT 7:00 THAT I HAVE TO WATCH!

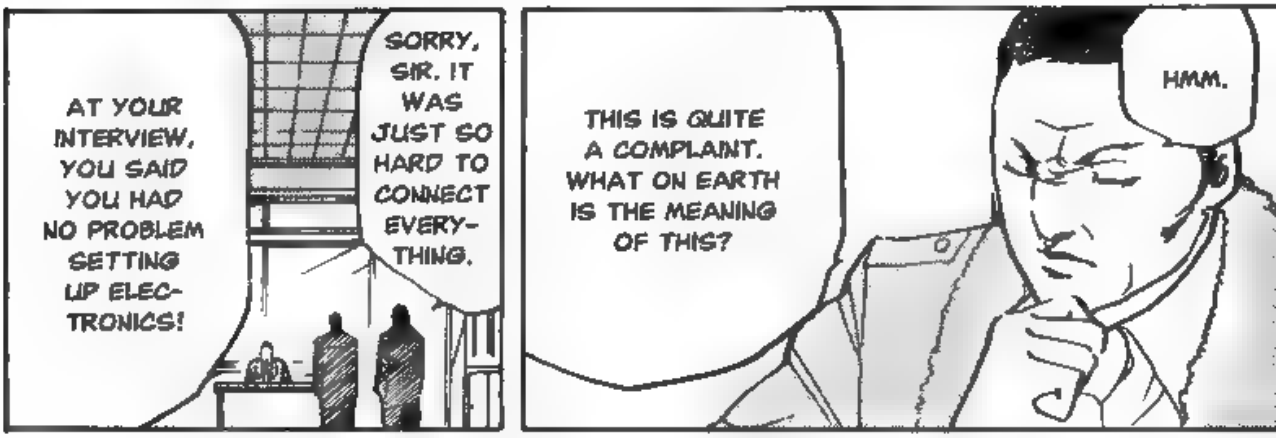
TWO HOURS LATER

REALLY? THAT'S EXCELLENT, THANKS.
YES, WE'LL BE DONE WITH TIME TO SPARE.
7:00? THAT STILL LEAVES US TWO HOURS. THAT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME.

WHAT HAPPENED TO "TIME TO SPARE"?!
HM. IT WON'T FIT THERE, WILL IT?
UH, WHERE DO YOU PLUG THIS IN?
TRUST US, SIR. WE'RE JUST ONE STEP AWAY FROM FINISHING.
WE'VE ONLY GOT FIVE MINUTES TILL THE SHOW STARTS!
カチン K-CHK
LET'S POWER IT UP.
≡PHEW!≡ THAT DOES IT.
カ CHK チ
THE SHOW'S ALREADY OVER!
YES!
IT'S ON!
The White Grape
"Final Episode"
"The Big Grape"
End

I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING THE FINAL EPISODE ON A BIG-SCREEN TV, BUT WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?! MY ENTIRE DAY'S BEEN WASTED!
I'VE NEVER BEEN TREATED THIS WAY IN MY LIFE! I TOOK THE DAY OFF FROM WORK AND HAVE BEEN WAITING AROUND SINCE MORNING FOR YOU PEOPLE!

PONCE ELECTRONICS
THAT'S IT! I WILL NEVER SHOP HERE AGAIN!


AT YOUR INTERVIEW, YOU SAID YOU HAD NO PROBLEM SETTING UP ELEC-TRONICS!
SORRY, SIR. IT WAS JUST SO HARD TO CONNECT EVERY-THING.
THIS IS QUITE A COMPLAINT. WHAT ON EARTH IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
HMM.

ANYWAY, AT THIS COMPANY, NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN **TRUST**! TRY PUTTING YOURSELF IN THE CUSTOMER'S SHOES, WHY DON'T YOU?! NOW GO APOLOGIZE, AND DO IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT.
"THESE MODERN TVS"?! HOW THE HELL OLD ARE YOU?! QUIT TALKING LIKE SOME GUY IN HIS 50s!
BUT THESE MODERN TVS ARE SO DIF-FERENT..

IT WOULD BE EASY, BUT IF WE DID THAT, IT WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT THAN BEFORE.
SPLOSH
WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE QUIT?
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, ONE OF THE REASONS WE WERE LATE WAS THAT THE BOSS GOT THE DISPATCH ALL WRONG.

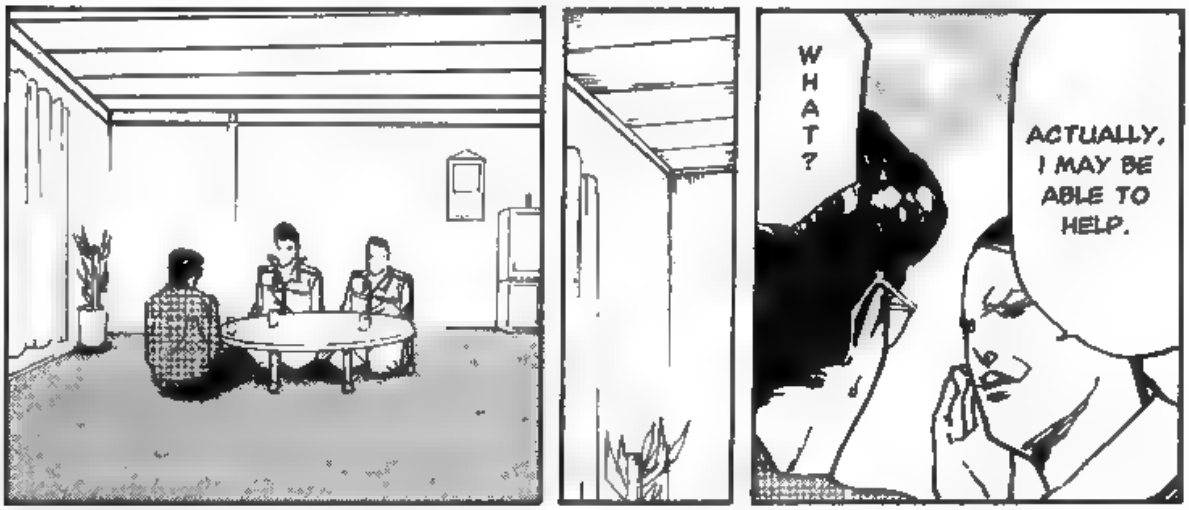
PUT OURSELVES IN HIS SHOES? WELL, WE HAVE TO THINK LIKE HIM.
ALRIGHT, LET'S DO IT. BUT HOW DO WE PUT OURSELVES IN THAT CUSTOMER'S SHOES AND APOLOGIZE LIKE WE MEAN IT?
I THINK QUITTING WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH IS A BAD HABIT TO FALL INTO. WHAT DO YOU SAY WE STICK IT OUT A LITTLE LONGER?

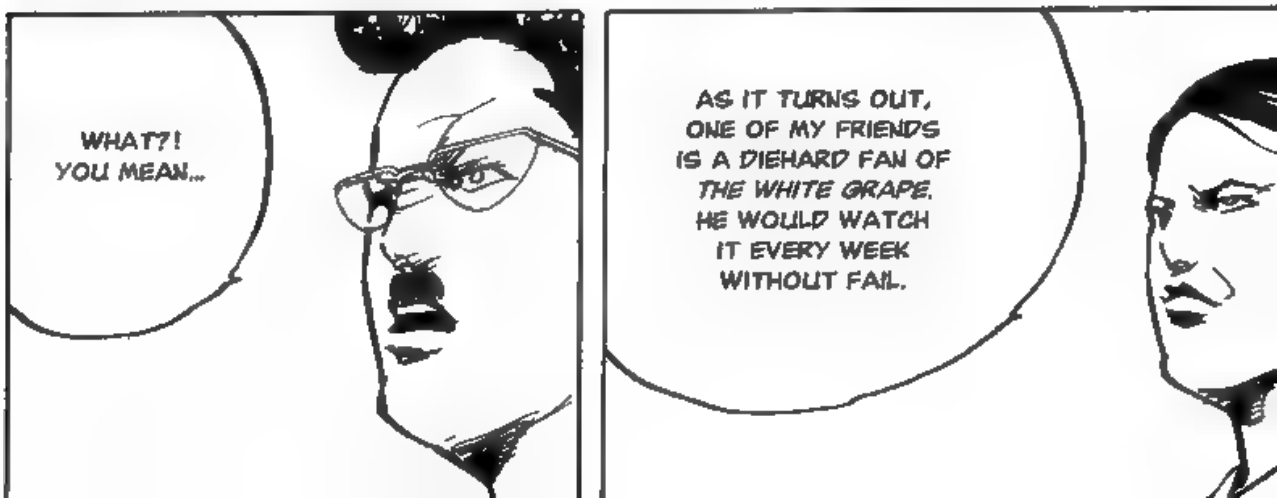
WELL, I'D ASK AROUND AMONG MY FRIENDS WHO LIKE THOSE SORTS OF DRAMAS. HOPEFULLY ONE OF THEM RECORDED IT.
SO WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN A SITUA-TION LIKE THIS?
HUH. IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT DOES GET YOU PRETTY ANGRY.
THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO CONSIDER HOW WE WOULD FEEL IF WE'D MISSED A PROGRAM WE'D BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO.

YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO LIKE THOSE SORTS OF DRAMAS?
HUH? SOME WHAT?
YOU HAVE SOME?

YES?
DING
DONG

YOU COULD GET ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES AND BEG, AND I STILL WOULDN'T FORGIVE YOU! I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE THAT SHOW AGAIN!
YOU TWO AGAIN?! WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET OUT OF HERE?
WE'RE VERY SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY. WE'VE COME TO APOLOGIZE.

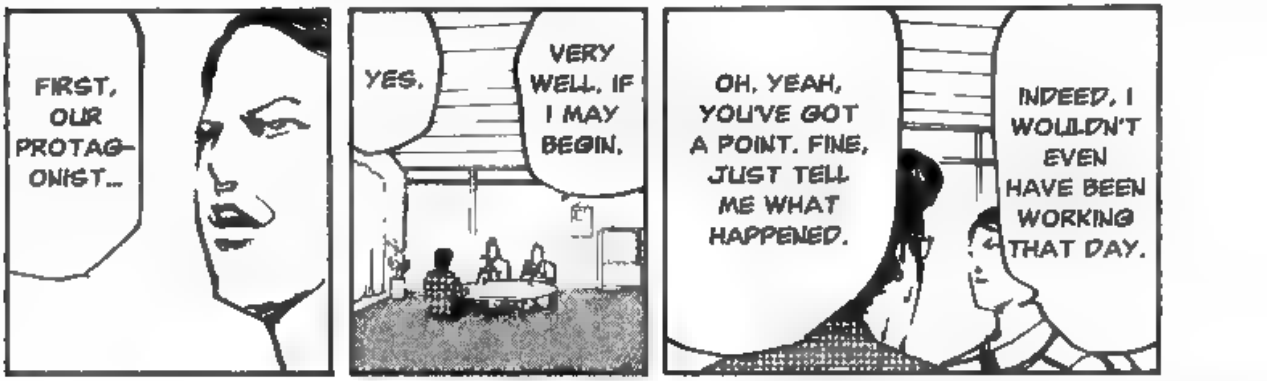

WHAT?
ACTUALLY, I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.


WHAT?! YOU MEAN...
AS IT TURNS OUT, ONE OF MY FRIENDS IS A DIEHARD FAN OF *THE WHITE GRAPE*. HE WOULD WATCH IT EVERY WEEK WITHOUT FAIL.

YOUR KIND WORDS MAKE IT ALL WORTH-WHILE.
AAH, THAT'S GREAT NEWS. FOR A WHILE THERE, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO! THANKS VERY MUCH.
OF COURSE. AND THIS LAST EPISODE WAS NO EXCEPTION. HE REALLY DOES LIKE THE SHOW.
THIS FRIEND OF YOURS HAS BEEN RECORDING IT?!
IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE TO PRESENT TO YOU THE STORY OF THE FINAL EPISODE OF *THE WHITE GRAPE*.
NONE WHATSOEVER. MY FRIEND HAS ALREADY GIVEN ME A FULL SUMMARY OF WHAT HAPPENED.
SO THEN THERE'S NO PROBLEM.
UNFORTUNATELY, HE AND I AREN'T ON SUCH CLOSE TERMS. IN FACT, HE'S MORE A FRIEND OF A FRIEND.
YOU DIDN'T BORROW THE TAPE?
WAIT.
ALL YOU CAN OFFER ME IS AN **EXPLANATION** OF WHAT HAPPENED?! THAT'S NOT INTERESTING AT ALL!
WHAT THE HELL?
ACTUALLY, I DON'T REALLY KNOW HIM AT ALL. OUR RECENT PHONE CON-VERSATION WAS THE FIRST TIME WE HAD SPOKEN.

I MAY CON-TINUE?
YES, PLEASE DO.
W-WAIT! IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING AT ALL! IF I HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED LIKE THIS, THEN SO BE IT!
IN THAT CASE, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US.

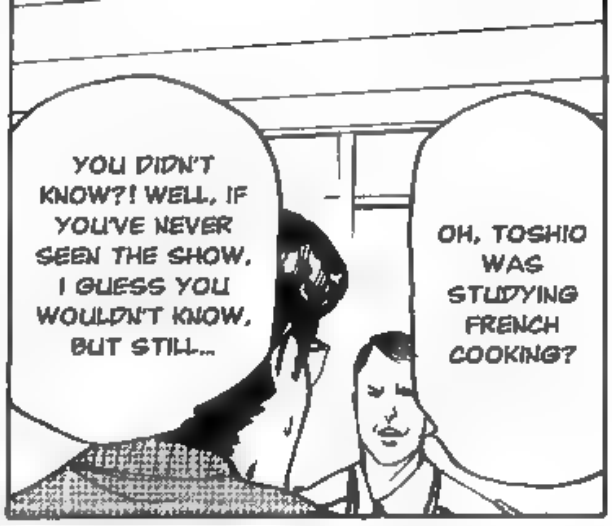
NATURALLY, IF I WERE A FAN, I WOULD HAVE RECORDED THE SHOW MYSELF.
WHAT?! YOU'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN THE SHOW?!
ALLOW ME TO PREFACE THIS BY SAYING I HAVE NEVER SEEN *THE WHITE GRAPE*, SO THE STORY AS I PRESENT IT MAY COME ACROSS AS SOMEWHAT UNINTERESTING. I WOULD ASK THAT YOU PLEASE KEEP THIS IN MIND.


FIRST, OUR PROTAG-ONIST...
YES.
VERY WELL. IF I MAY BEGIN.
OH, YEAH, YOU'VE GOT A POINT. FINE, JUST TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.
INDEED, I WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE BEEN WORKING THAT DAY.

AH, THAT'S RIGHT! KAWAMURA!
IT'S TOSHIO KAWAMURA! YOU DON'T EVEN *REMEMBER* THAT?!
WHAT'S HIS NAME AGAIN?
.....

THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT. HE'S SUPPOSED TO SUCCEED HIS FATHER! EVERYONE'S COUNTING ON HIM! THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD HAVE QUIT. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT?! TOSHIO QUIT HIS JOB?
ANYWAY, HE QUITS HIS JOB.
HMM, SAYING SOMETHING LIKE THAT BEFORE YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED SURE MAKES IT A LOT LESS INTERESTING.
IN FACT, TO BE PERFECTLY BLUNT, THE ENTIRE STORY IS LITTLE MORE THAN A PACK OF LIES.
Please calm yourself.
TRUE. I GUESS I'M JUST OVER-ANALYZING THINGS.
IMPOSSIBLE? BUT THIS IS A DRAMA. IT'S MAKE-BELIEVE.
AFTER HE QUITS HIS JOB...
OK, SO TOSHIO QUITS HIS JOB. THEN WHAT?
IF YOU INSIST.
WAIT! YOU CAN'T JUST STOP IN MID-STORY! IT'LL DRIVE ME CRAZY! PLEASE, TELL ME THE REST!
IN THAT CASE, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US.
TOSHIO'S FATHER IS A CHEF AT A FRENCH RESTAURANT! TOSHIO HIMSELF WAS ABOUT TO GO TO FRANCE TO STUDY COOKING! WHY WOULD HE SUDDENLY GET A PART-TIME JOB AT AN ELECTRONICS STORE?! I'VE HEARD OF CHANGING CAREERS BEFORE, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
NOW HOLD ON JUST A MINUTE!
HE STARTS WORKING PART-TIME IN AN ELEC-TRONICS STORE.

WHAT?!
I WONDER IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND TELLING ME INFORMATION LIKE THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE.


YOU DIDN'T KNOW?! WELL, IF YOU'VE NEVER SEEN THE SHOW, I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T KNOW, BUT STILL...
OH, TOSHIO WAS STUDYING FRENCH COOKING?

FINE. I'LL LISTEN FOR NOW. WHAT HAPPENS TO TOSHIO?
SHALL I CONTI-NUE?

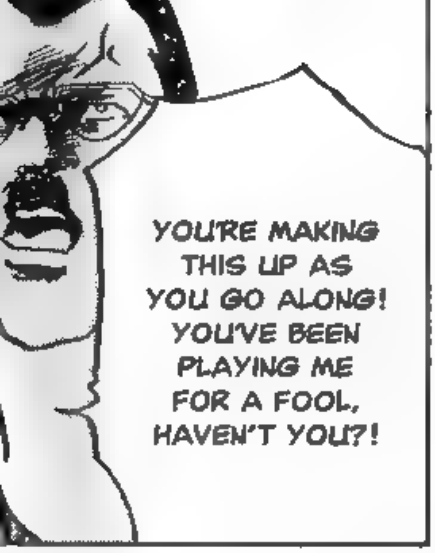
NO, NOT AT ALL. THAT WOULD ACTUALLY REQUIRE MORE EFFORT.
WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING TO YOU?! IS IT BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID SOMETHING YOU SAY WON'T MAKE SENSE? YOU'RE MAKING THIS UP, AREN'T YOU?!

. . . . . .
ONE DAY, HE DELIVERS A TELEVISION SET TO A CERTAIN CUSTOMER'S HOUSE.

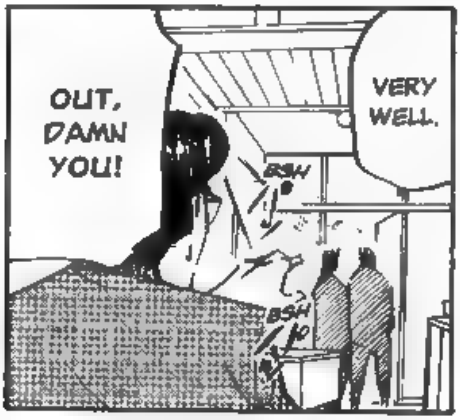
NEXT, HE IS ASSIGNED TO THE STORE'S DELIVERY SECTION.

I GET THE FEELING I'VE HEARD THIS SOMEWHERE BEFORE.

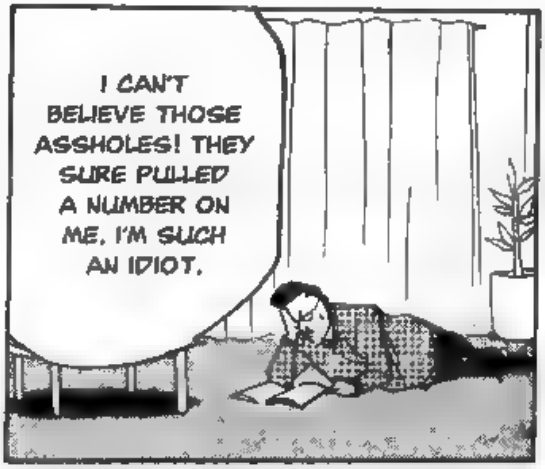
LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE PUTTING A LOT OF EFFORT INTO THIS STORY AND I HATE TO INTERRUPT YOU, BUT...
SADLY, SETTING UP THE TV PROVES UN-EXPECTEDLY DIFFICULT. HE—


YOU'RE MAKING THIS UP AS YOU GO ALONG! YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING ME FOR A FOOL, HAVEN'T YOU?!

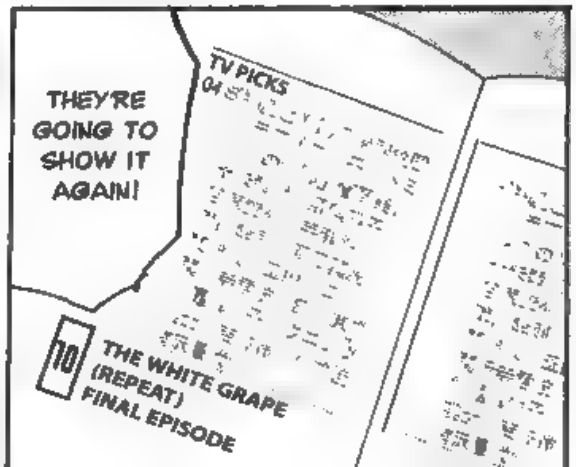
AH, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, IT DOES SEEM THAT WAY.
WAIT A MINUTE! THIS IS THE STORY OF YOU TWO JOKERS!


OUT, DAMN YOU!
VERY WELL.
BSH
BSH

SHUT YOUR MOUTH! GET OUT AND NEVER COME BACK!
PLEASE, THAT WAS NOT OUR INTENTION.


I CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE ASSHOLES! THEY SURE PULLED A NUMBER ON ME. I'M SUCH AN IDIOT.

I'M SO GLAD I SAW THIS! AND IT STARTS IN FIVE MINUTES! THANK GOD FOR SMALL MIRACLES!


THEY'RE GOING TO SHOW IT AGAIN!
TV PICKS
10
THE WHITE GRAPE
(REPEAT)
FINAL EPISODE

The White Grape
Final Episode
WELL, TIME TO START WATCHING!
PIP
YOU KNOW WHAT? NOW YOU'RE A MAN.
TOSHIO.
IT'S JUST LIKE HE SAID!
HURRY UP AND FINISH, WILL YOU?!
I THINK SO, TOO. WORKING AT THE ELECTRONICS STORE IS A MUCH BETTER FIT FOR YOU.
YEAH, NOT BECOMING A CHEF WAS THE RIGHT DECISION.

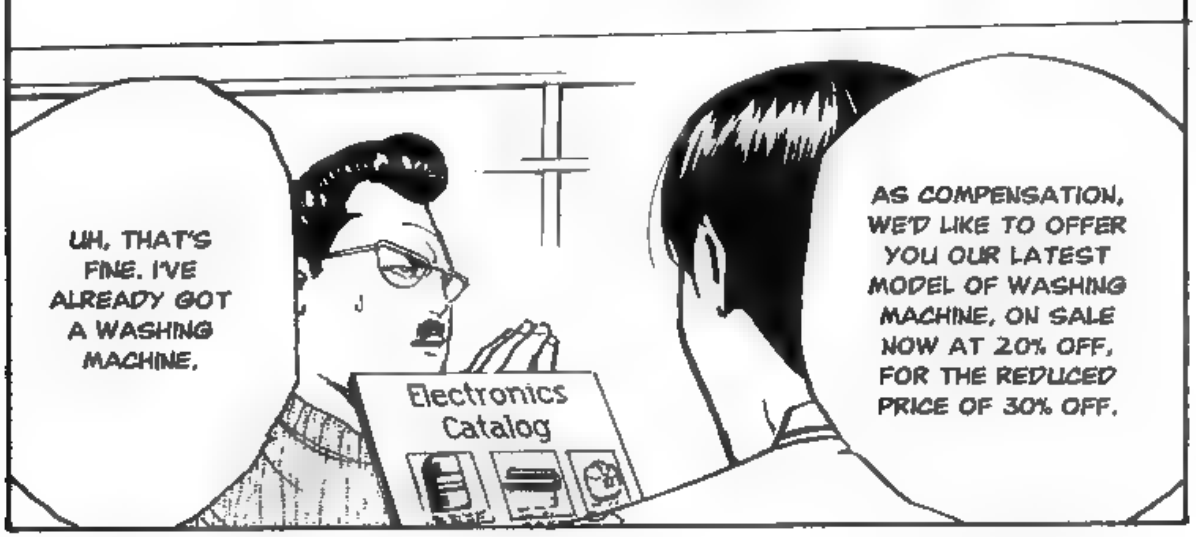
I'D LIKE TO WATCH A SHOW LIKE THAT.

CHAPTER 199: **DON'T LET ME DOWN**

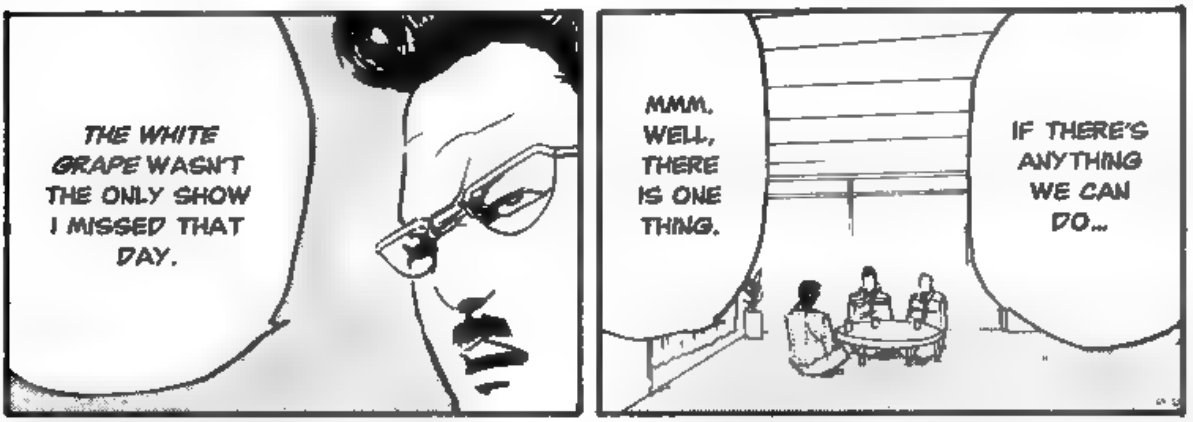
WELL, SO LONG AS YOU UNDERSTAND NOW, THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
I REALLY AM SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY. EVERYTHING YOU SAID WAS TRUE.

YES, THE TURN OF EVENTS IN THAT LAST EPISODE DID SEEM RATHER SUSPICIOUS. STILL, THIS IS COMING FROM SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T WATCH A LOT OF DRAMAS.
IT'S JUST... I MUST SAY, I WAS A LITTLE DISSATISFIED WITH THE ENDING.

NO, DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF. IT'S WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE.
I FEEL WE WON'T BE ABLE TO REST UNTIL WE'VE DONE SOMETHING TO MAKE UP FOR IT...
IN ANY CASE, THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR LESS OF AN ORDEAL IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE INCOMPETENCE OF MYSELF AND MY PARTNER.


UH, THAT'S FINE. I'VE ALREADY GOT A WASHING MACHINE.
Electronics Catalog
AS COMPENSATION, WE'D LIKE TO OFFER YOU OUR LATEST MODEL OF WASHING MACHINE, ON SALE NOW AT 20% OFF, FOR THE REDUCED PRICE OF 30% OFF.

ACTUALLY, WE'RE NOT EVEN SURE **HOW** WE COULD MAKE IT UP TO YOU.
SORRY ABOUT THAT, SIR. OUR BOSS HAS BEEN AFTER US PRETTY HARD ABOUT OUR SALES THIS MONTH.
YOU KNOW, THAT SOUNDED MORE LIKE A SALES PITCH THAN AN APOLOGY.

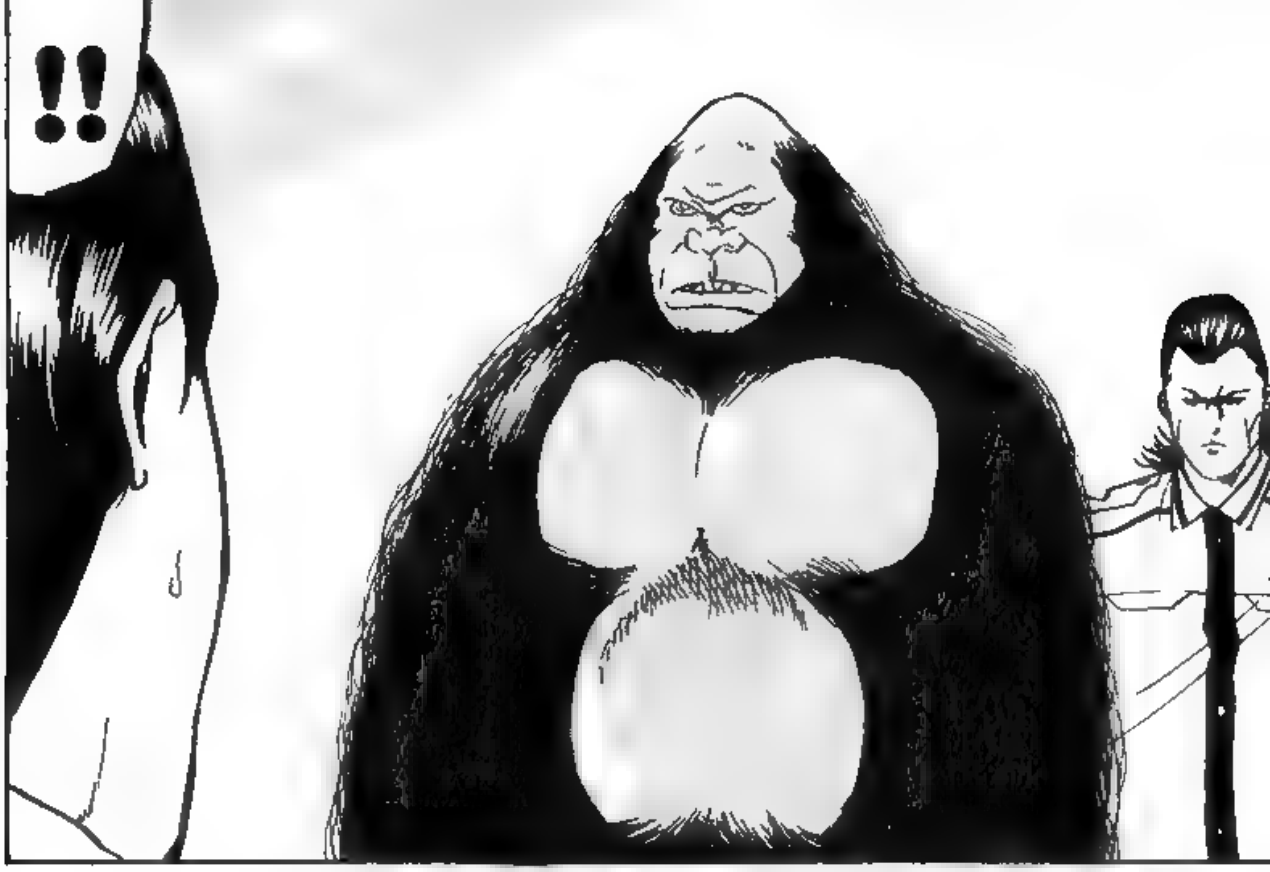

THE WHITE GRAPE WASN'T THE ONLY SHOW I MISSED THAT DAY.
MMM. WELL, THERE IS ONE THING.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN DO...

BIG OL' BOOM.
YES. BIG OL' BOOM.
OH! THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE?

I WOULDN'T SAY I'M CRAZY ABOUT THEM OR ANYTHING, BUT...WELL, THEY'RE RATHER POPULAR THESE DAYS, SO I THOUGHT I'D GIVE IT A TRY.
OH, YOU LIKE THOSE KINDS OF SHOWS AS WELL, DO YOU?
NO, IT'S NOT A DRAMA. IT'S A COMEDY VARIETY.
THAT'S A RATHER UNUSUAL TITLE FOR A DRAMA.
OH, NO. WHEN YOU HAVE TO **EXPLAIN** COMEDY, NONE OF THE HUMOR COMES THROUGH. IT JUST FALLS FLAT.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO DO LIKE LAST TIME AND EXPLAIN EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED!
LEAVE IT TO US. WE'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.
BUT YOU SAID YOU'RE NOT SO CLOSE WITH HIM, RIGHT? WOULD HE EVEN LET YOU BORROW IT?
LUCKILY, THE PERSON I TALKED TO ABOUT *THE WHITE GRAPE* IS ALSO A BIG FAN OF COMEDY. I'M SURE HE RECORDED IT.
YES, THAT DOES SOUND PROMISING! PLEASE ASK HIM!
HE SAID HE WANTS TO "SPREAD COMEDY AROUND THE WORLD," SO I'M SURE THAT THIS TIME IT WON'T BE A PROBLEM.

YEAH, HE'S REALLY PARTICULAR. ACCORDING TO HIM, BIG OL' BOOM IS BORING AND ANYONE WHO WATCHES IT HAS NO COMEDIC SENSE.
WHAT?! THE GUY'S A BIG COMEDY FAN BUT HE DIDN'T RECORD IT?
NO, IT LOOKS LIKE HE DIDN'T RECORD IT.
SO, DID YOU GET IT FROM HIM?
KEEP OFF THE GRASS
WELL, HE DIDN'T RECORD BIG OL' BOOM, BUT HE SAYS HE SAW IT. HE REALLY IS INTO COMEDY, SO HE WATCHES IT EVEN THOUGH HE THINKS IT'S BORING.
WE CAN'T SWITCH SHOWS LIKE THAT!
WARRIORS OF COMEDY
THE HITS
HE LENT ME THIS INSTEAD. APPARENTLY IT'S THE FUNNIEST THING EVER.
HMM, THERE IS ONE GUY WHO SEEMS LIKE HE MIGHT BE. I'LL ASK HIM TOMORROW.
SUZUKI-SAN, ARE ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS INTO COMEDY?
WAIT, YOU'RE GOING TO TRY EXPLAINING IT TO THAT CUSTOMER AGAIN?!
SO I HAD HIM TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.
NAH, NO WAY.
ARE YOU INTO COMEDY?
HAYA-SHIDA, DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?

REALLY? THAT'S TOO BAD. OH, THERE'S SOMETHING I FORGOT TO MENTION: APPARENTLY, THIS SHOW'S A SKETCH COMEDY.
SORRY, NO GOOD.
WELL?
I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING.
YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE TO ACT THE SKETCHES OUT, AREN'T WE?
SURE WOULD...
A SKETCH COMEDY? IT WOULD BE PRETTY HARD TRYING TO EXPLAIN SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
.....
.....
HUH. THEN IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE SHORT A GUY.
BUT WE'LL NEED A THIRD PERSON TO DO IT.
I BROUGHT HIM.
REALLY? THAT'D BE GREAT!
I THOUGHT OF SOMEONE WHO MIGHT HELP. I'LL TRY ASKING HIM.



REALLY?! THAT IS A COINCIDENCE. THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF GORILLAS AROUND, HUH?
TALK ABOUT A COINCIDENCE-- ONE OF MY FRIENDS IS A GORILLA, TOO!

TELL 'EM THE TRUTH, GORILLA.

CHAPTER 200: **CAN'T GET ANYTHING**

AH!
BLGH!
THWOK

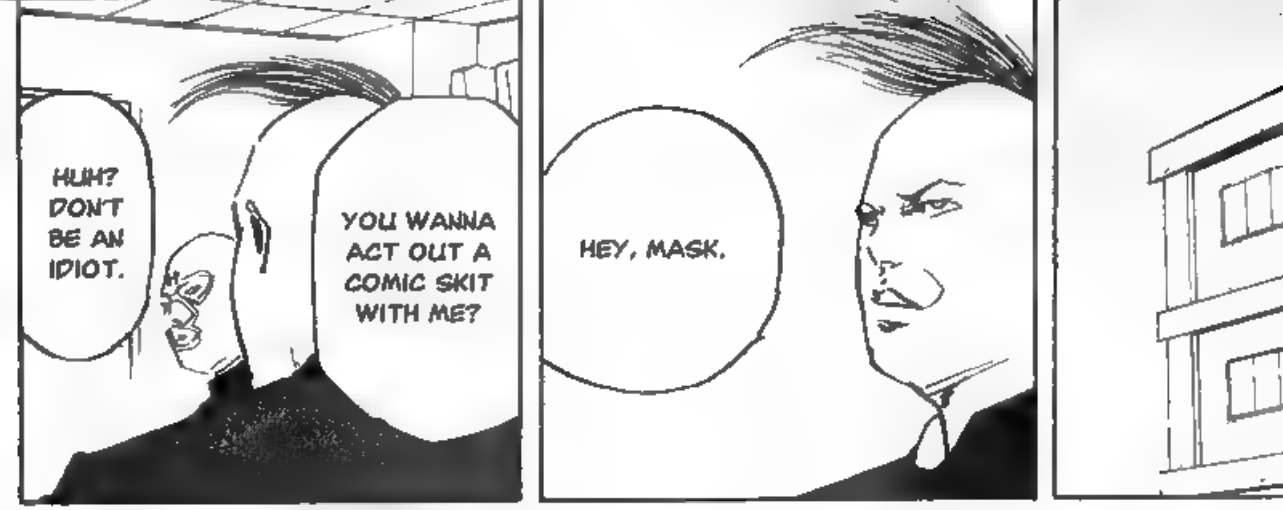
SASUKE-SAN!

THOMP
SKSSH

THE THING ABOUT THE SMACK, THOUGH, IS THAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO **LOOK** LIKE IT HURTS BUT NOT ACTUALLY HURT. THAT'S ONE OF THE CARDINAL RULES.

I-I THINK I KINDA LOST CONSCIOUSNESS FOR A SECOND THERE, BUT I'M OK.
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!

SMACK
AND THIS IS THE IMPORTANT PART, AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO HIT HIM, YOU DROP THE SPEED AND JUST SORT OF SLAP HIM.
BWSH
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WHIP OUT YOUR ARM, BUT RIGHT BEFORE YOU MAKE CONTACT...
IN ANY CASE, I DON'T THINK THE GORILLA HAS QUITE GRASPED THE SUBTLETIES OF THIS TECHNIQUE.
IT'S A LITTLE LIKE WHAT THEY DO IN PRO WRESTLING, ISN'T IT?
SEE? BUT YOU REALLY WORK THE SLAP, SO IT MAKES A NICE, LOUD SOUND.
OH, I GET IT! YES, THAT DOESN'T HURT AT ALL!
OK, LIKE I SAID...
SURE. I'LL EXPLAIN IT AND WE CAN TRY AGAIN.
WELL, WOULD YOU MIND GOING OVER IT AGAIN, THIS TIME WITH HIM?
I THINK THAT WOULD BE BEST.
I DON'T THINK WE HAVE A CHOICE: WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE TO REPLACE THE GORILLA. I'LL TRY ASKING AROUND AGAIN.
SORRY. THIS DOES LOOK A LITTLE DANGER-OUS...
HEY, ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ME KILLED?!
CLENCH


HUH? DON'T BE AN IDIOT.
YOU WANNA ACT OUT A COMIC SKIT WITH ME?
HEY, MASK.

HM?
WAIT! SASUKE-SAN, LOOK AT THAT!
I GUESS WE HAVE TO GIVE UP ON PERFORMING THESE SKITS THEN.
I'M NOT SURPRISED. IF SOMEONE SUDDENLY ASKED ME, I'D SAY NO, TOO.
HE SAID NO.
KEEP OFF THE GRASS

I MAY HAVE BEEN WRONG. I'VE BEEN CALLING HIM AN AMATEUR, BUT WE ARE AMATEURS, TOO.
TH-THE GORILLA'S READING THE SCRIPT!
SCRIPT

YES! IT'S TIME TO GET BACK TO PRACTICING!
OK! WHAT DO YOU SAY WE RECRUIT THE GORILLA AGAIN?
SASUKE-SAN...
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF WHETHER OR NOT WE'RE ANY GOOD--IT'S HOW MUCH DETERMINATION WE HAVE!

WE'VE GOTTEN SO GOOD THAT AT ONE POINT, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO START HOLDING MY SIDES AND LAUGHING!
ALRIGHT, IT'S PERFECT! WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT WE COULD WORK SO WELL TOGETHER?
TWO HOURS LATER
LOOK AT HOW HARD WE'VE WORKED AND HOW FAR WE'VE COME!
WHAT ARE YOU HAVING DOUBTS FOR?!
DO YOU THINK HE'LL GET IT?
THEN ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO DO THIS.
K-CHAK
YES?
YOU'RE RIGHT. OK, LET'S DO OUR BEST!
IF WE DO OUR BEST, I'M SURE OUR SINCERITY WILL COME THROUGH.
BUT HAVE NO FEAR! WE WILL REENACT THAT PROGRAM FOR YOU!
WE'RE TERRIBLY SORRY, BUT WE WEREN'T ABLE TO GET YOU THE VIDEOTAPE.

LOOKS LIKE NONE OF THE GORILLA'S SINCERITY WILL BE COMING THROUGH.

Writings From Elementary School

My Dream for the Future
By Takeshi Hokuto

In the future, I wish to stand at the forefront of Japan's populace, manipulating the masses to follow my every whim. There are two types of people: those who rule and those who are ruled. Naturally, I am of the former. I must study hard in order to become an even more excellent specimen of humanity. There are many people who, no matter how hard they try, shall forever amount to nothing. I must exert greater effort to think of ways in which these people can be controlled.

Writings From Elementary School

When I Grow Up

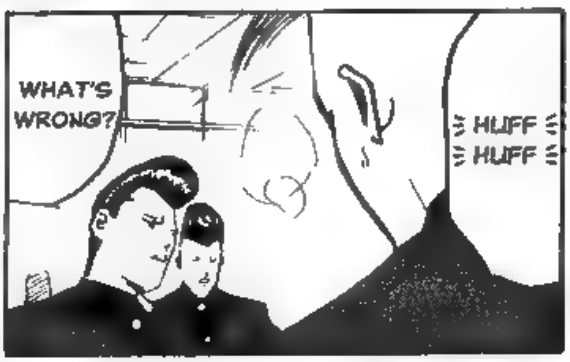
By Noboru Yamaguchi

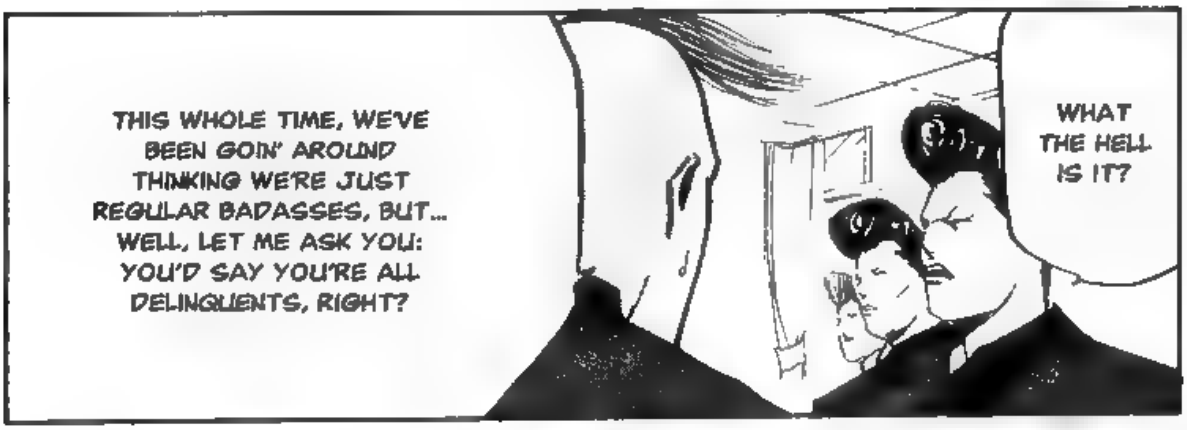
I love listening to the radio. I especially like late night radio shows. If my mom finds me listening to them, she gets mad and says, "Hurry up and go to bed!" So now I bury myself under the covers and listen to them on my headphones. But if it's a really funny joke, sometimes I'll laugh out loud and she'll catch me.

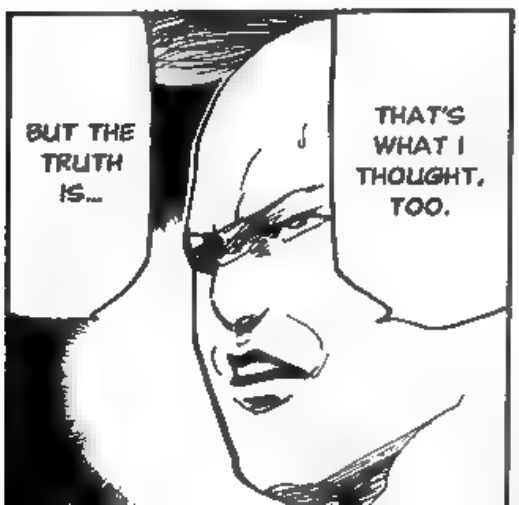
When I grow up, I want to be on those kinds of radio shows. I want to make a show where I start things off with, "Heeey, are you all listening out there?"

I can't wait for the day when I can make people explode with laughter.

CHAPTER 201: **ALL TOGETHER NOW**

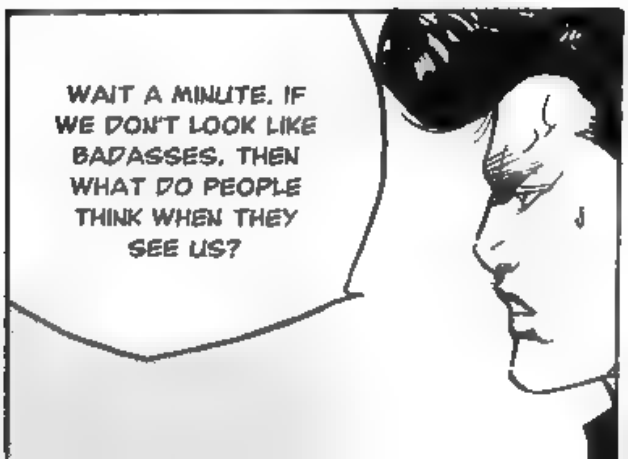



THIS WHOLE TIME, WE'VE BEEN GOIN' AROUND THINKING WE'RE JUST REGULAR BADASSES, BUT... WELL, LET ME ASK YOU: YOU'D SAY YOU'RE ALL DELINQUENTS, RIGHT?
WHAT THE HELL IS IT?



N-NO WAY!
THESE KINDS OF DELINQUENTS DON'T EXIST ANYMORE.
Caution
Needlessly oversized → pompadour
Oversized jacket
Perm
Gang uniform
Over sized pants

THINK REAL HARD-- HAVE YOU SEEN ANYONE LOOKIN' LIKE THAT OUT ON THE STREETS?
YEAH! THIS AIN'T FUNNY, HAYA-SHIDA.
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!


WAIT A MINUTE. IF WE DON'T LOOK LIKE BADASSES, THEN WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK WHEN THEY SEE US?

YOU SEE?! WE'RE BEHIND THE TIMES!
YEAH, I GUESS NOT.

WE MAY HAVE, LIKE, MORALITY ISSUES, BUT WE'RE NOT IGNORANT! WE'VE GOT STREET SMARTS!
IGNO-RANT? MAN, THAT HURTS.
WHAT?! THAT'S TERRIBLE!
A BUNCH OF IGNORANT WEIRDOS WHO AREN'T RIGHT IN THE HEAD.
WELL, I'D HAVE TO SAY WE LOOK LIKE...
THESE ARE SOME AMBIG-UOUS TIMES!
HUH?!
SLRRP
SEE, THAT'S THE THING. THEY **DON'T** LOOK ANY DIFFERENT. THEY'RE JUST... NORMAL.
FINE, THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS: WHAT DOES YOUR MODERN-DAY BADASS LOOK LIKE?
YEAH. EVEN INTELLIGENT, RESPECTABLE GIRLS DYE THEIR HAIR NOW. IT'S GETTIN' TO WHERE PEOPLE WITH THEIR NORMAL HAIR ARE IN THE MINORITY
COME TO THINK OF IT, EVEN NORMAL PEOPLE DYE THEIR HAIR AND GET PIERCINGS THESE DAYS. I GUESS YOU CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BADASSES AND THE REGULAR GUYS ANYMORE.
THAT'S RIGHT! AND STANDIN' OUT IS THE DUTY OF ANY TRUE BADASS! WE SHOULD ALL TRY IT TOMORROW!
ANYONE WHO COMBS HIS HAIR IN THE OLD "BUSINESSMAN'S PART" WOULD ACTUALLY STAND OUT!
SO THAT MEANS...

HEY.
MORNIN'.

IF WE ALL WENT OUT TOGETHER, I BET PEOPLE WOULD GET SO SCARED THAT NO ONE WOULD COME NEAR US!
YEAH, I GELLED THIS BAD BOY INTO PLACE BEFORE I CAME TO SCHOOL.

YOU'RE ALL STILL PARTIN' YOUR HAIR LIKE THAT, HUH? IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE REALLY RUNNIN' WITH THIS.

THOSE ASSHOLES HAVE REALLY BEEN PUSHIN' THEIR LUCK LATELY. I SAY WE GO OVER THERE AND **WHAM**, WE STICK IT TO 'EM!
LET'S DO IT!
ALRIGHT! WHAT DO YOU SAY WE HEAD OVER TO BASS AND GET THOSE SONS OF BITCHES?!

WELL, WE'VE TAKEN CARE OF LOOKIN' IGNORANT, BUT... WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING ABOUT THE "WEIRDO" PART.
DOES SOMETHIN' SEEM ODD TO YOU? I FEEL LIKE WE'RE DOING SOMETHIN' WRONG...

HOLD ON A SECOND.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
LISTEN TO YOURSELVES! WHAT ARE YOU, A BUNCH OF IDIOTS?
IT'S LIKE TRYING TO STAND OUT JUST ENDS UP MAKIN' YOU WEIRD. WE HAVE TO GET WITH THE TIMES--WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO DYE OUR HAIR AND GET PIERCINGS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

BUT IF WE CAN'T PART OUR HAIR LIKE THIS AND WE CAN'T USE OUR OLD HAIRSTYLE, WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO? OUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO DYE IT, RIGHT?
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
BADASSES HAVE ALWAYS STOOD **APART** FROM THE CROWD. WE'RE OUT OF CONTROL! WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU WANNA TRY TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?!

WHAT I'M SAYIN' IS THAT AS BADASSES, THE DAY WE BACK DOWN FROM A CHALLENGE IS THE DAY WE'VE OFFICIALLY BEEN BEATEN! WE NEED TO COME UP WITH A NEW HAIRSTYLE, SOMETHIN' THE LIKES OF WHICH THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN. THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A TRUE BADASS!
THE BUSINESSMAN'S PART AND THE TO-THE-SKY POMPADOUR HAVE BEEN DONE TO DEATH. THE SAME GOES FOR DYING YOUR HAIR.

GOOD
FINE, SO EVERYONE GOES HOME AND THINKS OF A NEW HAIRSTYLE BY TOMORROW. HOW'S THAT?
YEAH! TALKIN' AS A GROUP WON'T ALLOW OUR INDIVIDUALITY TO COME THROUGH!
FORGET IT! IF WE TALK ABOUT THIS WITH ONE ANOTHER, IT'LL STIFLE OUR CREATIVITY! WE'VE GOTTA THINK ABOUT THIS ON OUR OWN!
WE'LL HAVE TO GET TOGETHER AND TRADE IDEAS.
A NEW HAIRSTYLE? I CAN'T THINK OF SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.

WHAT?!
HUH?!

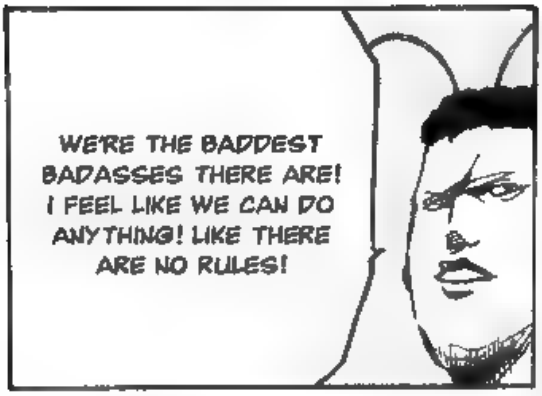
SO EVERYONE THOUGHT OF THE SAME THING?
YOU, TOO?
THAT'S WHAT YOU CAME UP WITH?!

WE ALL CAME UP WITH THE SAME HAIRSTYLE. WE'RE ALSO ALL STUDENTS AT CROMARTIE, WHICH IS ARGUABLY THE PINNACLE OF BADASSNESS. IF YOU ASK ME, THAT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING...
HERE'S THE DEAL.

WHOA! SO THIS IS IT, HUH?
THAT'S WHAT I WAS THINKIN'!
THIS IS THE NEW STYLE FOR BADASSES!
FUN WITH PAINTING

YES! IF WE RAIDED BASS LIKE THIS, THOSE BASTARDS WOULD THROW THEMSELVES AT OUR FEET! WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE TO FIGHT!
IF WE WALKED OUTSIDE, I BET PEOPLE WOULD BE SO SCARED THAT NO ONE WOULD COME NEAR US.

THAT JUST SHOWS THE POWER OF THIS NEW STYLE.
NOW THAT YOU'VE SAID THAT, YOUR FACE IS STARTIN' TO LOOK MORE AND MORE BADASS. YOU'RE PRACTICALLY A GODDAMN SCOUNDREL!


WE'RE THE BADDEST BADASSES THERE ARE! I FEEL LIKE WE CAN DO ANYTHING! LIKE THERE ARE NO RULES!

YEAH, ME TOO. IT'S LIKE WE'VE CROSSED A LINE OR SOMETHIN'.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE BECOME SO INCREDIBLY BAD. I'M KINDA SCARED...

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS...

WE CAN DO WHATEVER THE HELL WE WANT, AND NO ONE CAN SAY SHIT!
THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' THAT CAN SCARE US NOW. NOTHIN' IS GOIN' TOO FAR!

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! IT WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM AT ALL!
WITH THESE, WE COULD GO TO THE BANK WITHOUT OUR IDs AND THEY'D STILL PROCESS OUR TRANSACTIONS!

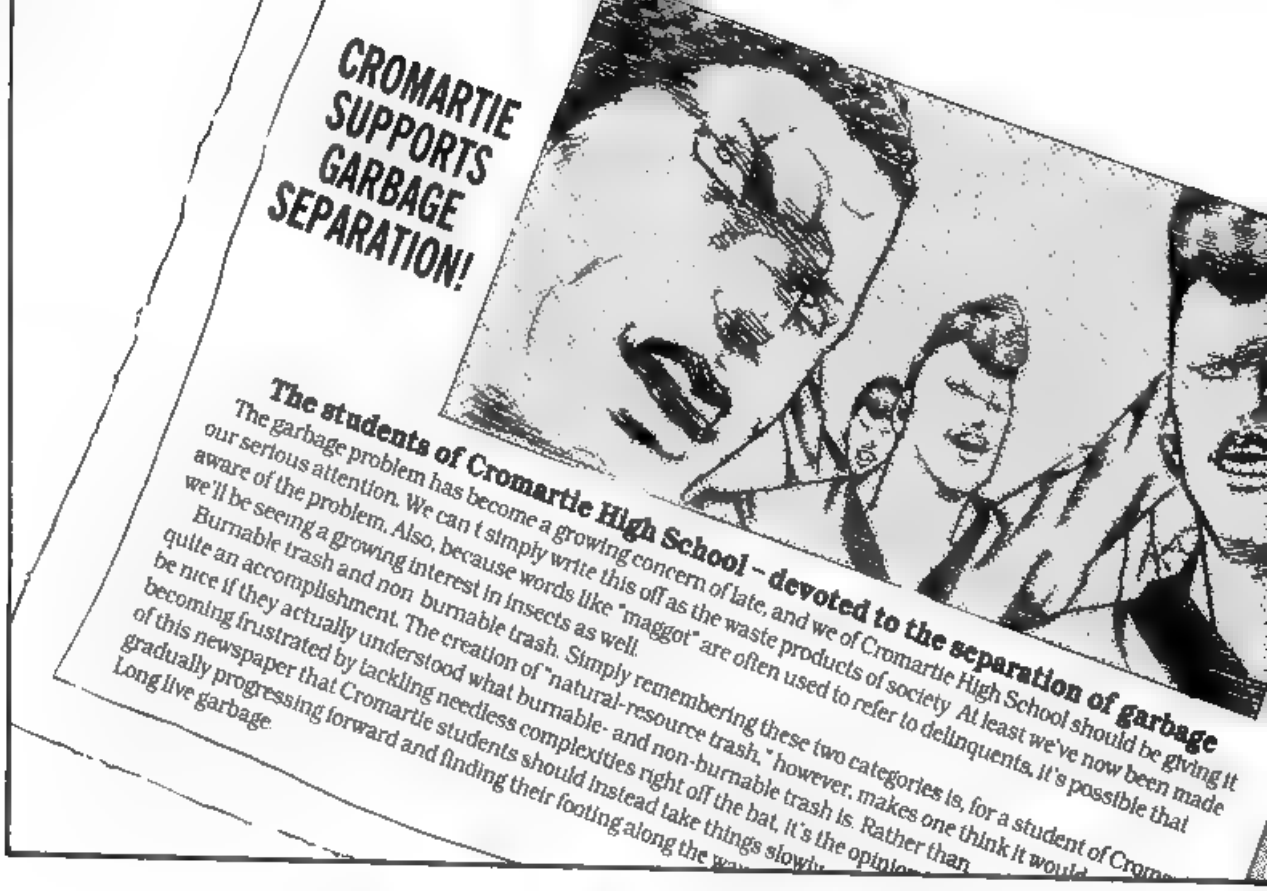
I HAVE A FEELING THIS WOULD MAKE THEM EASIER TO GET CLOSE TO THAN REGULAR BADASSES.

CHAPTER 202: **IT'S ALL TOO MUCH**

WHAT IS IT?
NOT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT OR ANYTHING, BUT...
THE OTHER DAY, SOME OLD DUDE AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE WAS ALL, "I DON'T MIND YOU HANGING AROUND IN FRONT OF THE STORE, BUT AT LEAST SEPARATE YOUR TRASH WHEN YOU THROW IT AWAY."
THAT'S ONE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SUBJECT!
DO YOU GUYS SEPARATE YOUR TRASH?
YEAH, THAT'S THE ONE. HE DOESN'T RAISE TOO MUCH OF A FUSS, BUT HE'S GOT HIS EYE ON US...AND HE'S SERIOUS ABOUT TRASH.
WAS IT THE OLD GUY FROM THAT CONVENIENCE STORE DOWN ON 2ND?
HMPH. TYPICAL.
HUH? IT'S NON-BURNABLE, RIGHT?
TAKE THIS EMPTY CAN. WHAT KIND OF TRASH DO YOU THINK IT IS: BURNABLE OR NON-BURNABLE?

I AIN'T NEVER HEARD OF IT. WHEN DID THEY MAKE THAT?
HUH?! NATURAL-RESOURCE TRASH? I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS SUCH A THING!
THIS IS NATURAL-RESOURCE TRASH.
HUH?
IDIOT!
YEAH! IT'S EASIER JUST TO THROW IT ALL OUT TOGETHER!
ANYWAY, SEPARATIN' YOUR TRASH IS A PAIN.
BUT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, CAN'T WE QUIT BEIN' SO SET IN OUR WAYS AND TAKE A MOMENT TO ACTUALLY THINK?!
YES, SEPARATIN' YOUR TRASH IS KIND OF A PAIN. AND YES, WE BADASSES AREN'T KNOWN FOR THINKIN' ABOUT THE FUTURE.
ALRIGHT, EVERYONE! WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GIVE THIS SEPARATIN' THING A TRY?!
HE'S GOT A POINT. WE'VE BEEN WRONG ABOUT THIS.
. . . . . .
THIS IS FOR OUR FUTURE. FOR OUR GRANDKIDS' FUTURE.

UH...
WHAT ABOUT THIS?
HEY, DAMMIT! SEPARATE LIKE YOU MEAN IT!
RUSTLE
SEASHELLS ARE NON-BURNABLE!
RUSTLE!
THIS IS BURN-ABLE, TOO.
THE LID'S BURNABLE AND THE BOTTOM PART IS NON-BURNABLE!
SAME HERE.
I FEEL, LIKE, INVIGORATED.
A TRASH FAN, HUH? NICE. I BET EVERYONE'S GONNA START WANTING TO DO THIS.
ME, TOO! I COULD TURN INTO A REAL FAN OF THIS STUFF!
I'VE ACTUALLY STARTED TO LIKE SEPARATIN' THE TRASH.
I'M A LITTLE EMBAR-RASSED TO SAY THIS, BUT...
LET'S GIVE IT ALL WE'VE GOT!
YEAH, IT RULES!
SEPARATIN' THE TRASH IS AWESOME!


CROMARTIE SUPPORTS GARBAGE SEPARATION!
The students of Cromartie High School – devoted to the separation of garbage
The garbage problem has become a growing concern of late, and we of Cromartie High School should be giving it our serious attention. We can t simply write this off as the waste products of society. At least we've now been made aware of the problem. Also, because words like "maggot" are often used to refer to delinquents, it's possible that we'll be seeing a growing interest in insects as well.
Burnable trash and non burnable trash. Simply remembering these two categories is, for a student of Crom quite an accomplishment. The creation of "natural-resource trash," however, makes one think it would be nice if they actually understood what burnable- and non-burnable trash is. Rather than becoming frustrated by tackling needless complexities right off the bat, it's the opinio of this newspaper that Cromartie students should instead take things slowly gradually progressing forward and finding their footing along the wa
Long live garbage.

THAT SIMPLY ISN'T POSSIBLE!
STUDENT NEWSPAPER

NO, IT ISN'T.

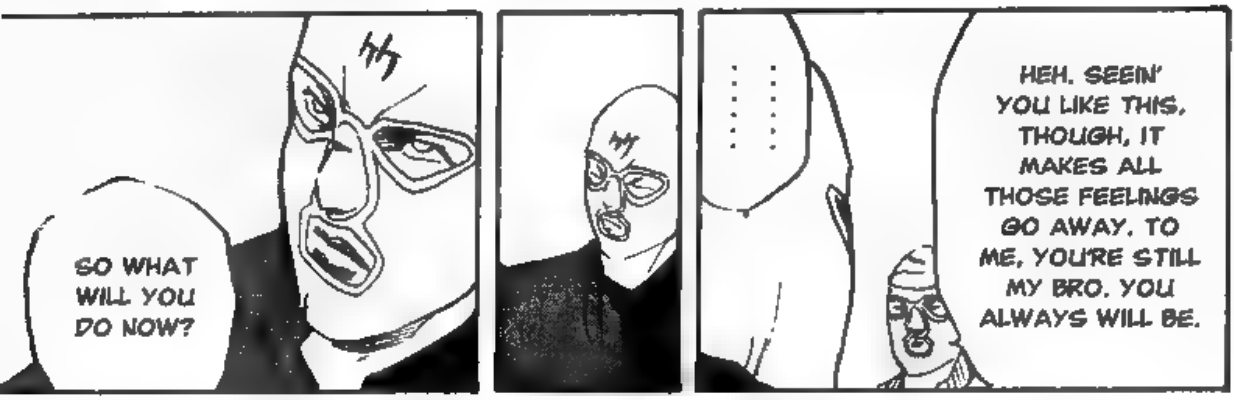
CHAPTER 203: **AN INNOCENT MAN**

HM?
HA HA!
HA! HAYASHIDA SURE IS WEIRD.
SOME FREAK JUST BARGED ONTO OUR CAMPUS. HE'S ALL ALONE, TOO.
UH...
HEY, WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
WHAT'S THAT?
BUT THERE'S JUST ONE OF HIM, RIGHT? IF HE'S THAT TOUGH, WHY DON'T YOU ALL JUST GANG UP ON HIM?
YEAH, BUT HE'S REALLY TOUGH. HE'S ALREADY TAKEN OUT TWO OF OUR GUYS!
WHAT?! HE'S ALONE?
WH...
AAH, SHUT THE HELL UP ALREADY. JUST MOVE!
WELL, THE THING IS...

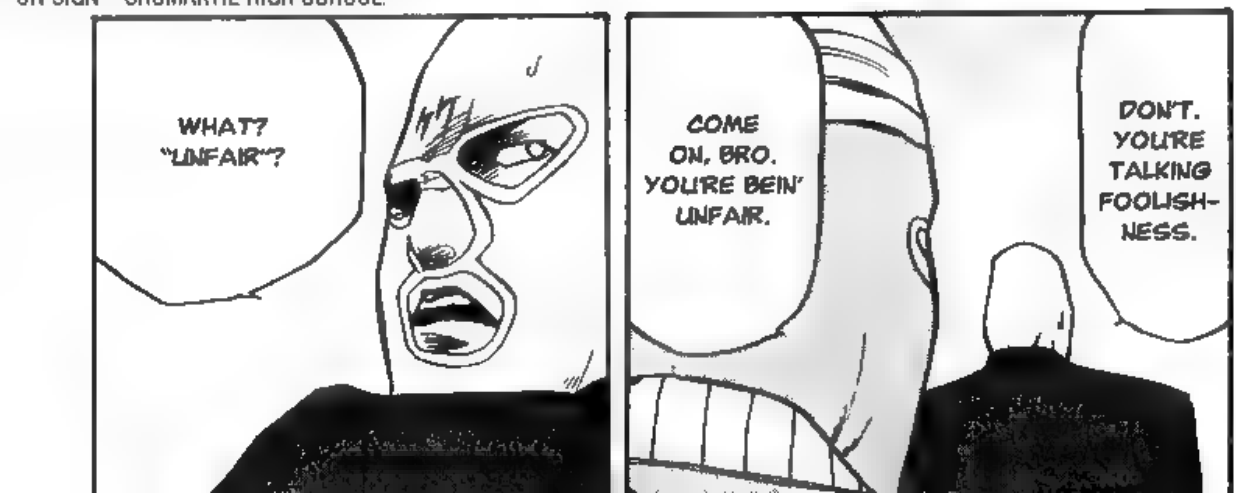
WHAT?!
. . . . . .
HAVEN'T WE SEEN THAT GUY SOMEWHERE BEFORE?
A MASK!
!!
SHP

MASK, YOU KNOW THAT GUY?
BRO?!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, BRO.
JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE, OK?
WELL, YOU SURE LOOK ALIKE. IT'S LIKE YOU'RE PRACTICALLY RELATED!
WE'RE COMPLETE STRANGERS.
NO.
HEH. THEY'VE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN, HUH?
YEAH. I CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE, THOUGH.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN THAT OTHER DUDE BEFORE.
SURE.
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO THIS GUY ALONE.
WHAT?! YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ME, TOO?!
UH... WHO ARE YOU AGAIN?
ANYWAY, SO LONG AS YOU REMEMBER ME, THAT'S ENOUGH. RIGHT?
WELL, I GUESS IT'S TO BE EXPECTED.

YEAH, SORRY. ANYWAY, YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, HUH?
WE HIJACKED THAT PLANE, REMEMBER?! WE WORKED TOGETHER FOR FIVE YEARS! COME ON, YOU CAN'T FORGET THAT!
WELL, I REMEMBER YOUR FACE, BUT NOT YOUR NAME. I may not look it, but I've got a lot of acquaintances.
THERE WASN'T A SINGLE DAY WHERE I ACTUALLY FELT ALIVE, YOU KNOW? I COULDN'T SLEEP... I FELT LIKE EVERY DAY, SOMEONE WAS AFTER ME.
IT WAS HELL, MAN. I MADE IT TO MEXICO BY THE SKIN OF MY TEETH.
SHBFF
IF WE'RE BOTH IN THE SAME PLACE, IT'LL JUST DRAW ATTENTION AND INCREASE OUR CHANCES OF GETTING CAUGHT. WE SHOULD HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER.
I THOUGHT WE'D SEVERED ALL TIES.
WHY ARE YOU BACK IN JAPAN?
AND?
I HATED YOU FOR THAT COLD STREAK YOU'VE GOT IN YOU. I'VE BEEN THINKIN' FOR A WHILE NOW THAT IF I HAVE TO DIE, YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
THINK WHAT YOU LIKE.
THAT SURE IS COLD. AM I A BURDEN TO YOU NOW?

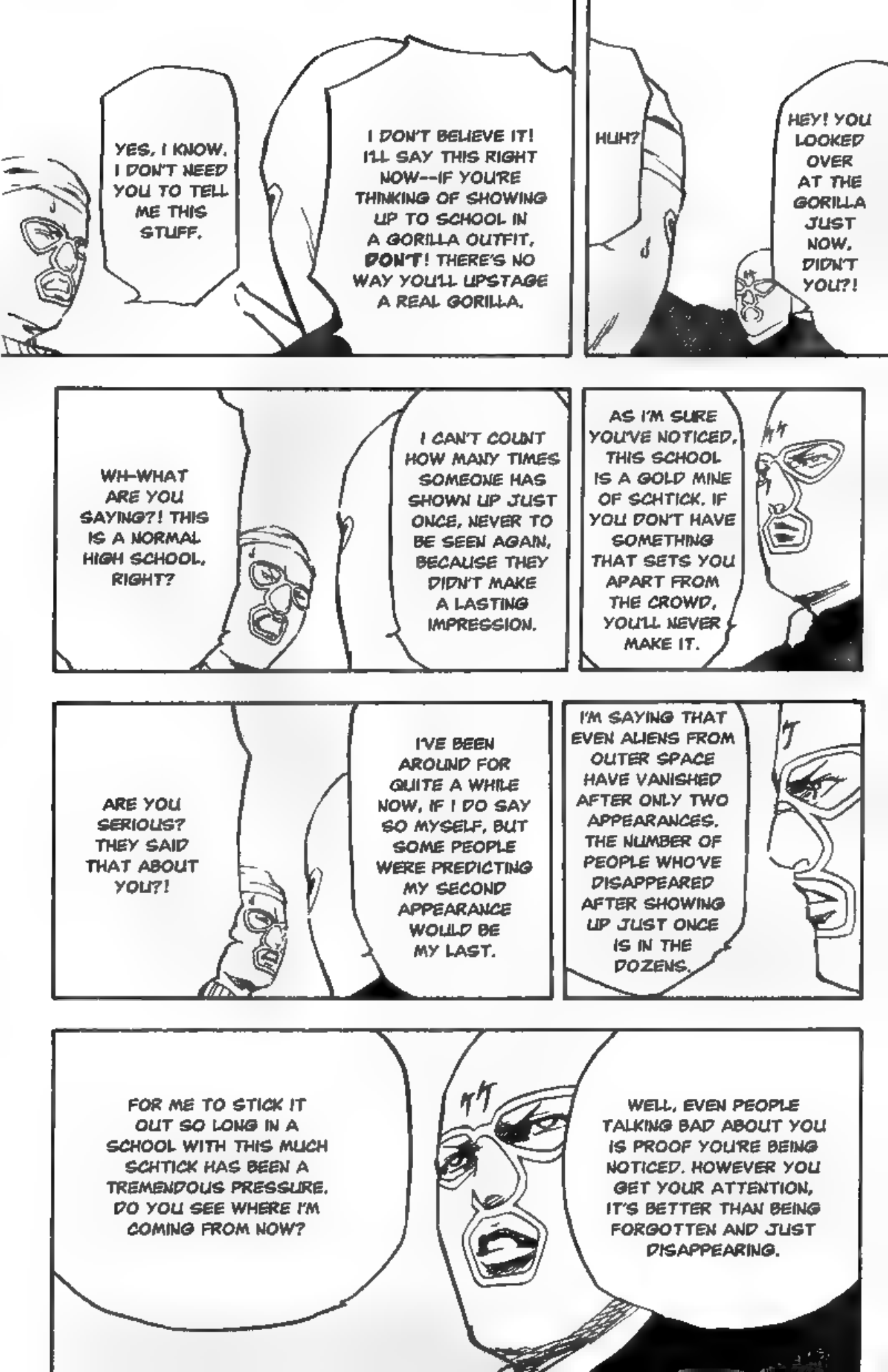

SO WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
HEH. SEEIN' YOU LIKE THIS, THOUGH, IT MAKES ALL THOSE FEELINGS GO AWAY. TO ME, YOU'RE STILL MY BRO. YOU ALWAYS WILL BE.

*ON SIGN "CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL."



THINK ABOUT IT. SINCE WHEN HAS HANGING OUT WITH A GORILLA BEEN "FUN"?
THIS PLACE MAY LOOK FUN, LIKE A ZOO OR SOMETHING, BUT YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE. IT'S NOT FUN, JUST A WHOLE LOT OF ANXIETY.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE KEEPIN' ALL THE FUN FOR YOURSELF! I MEAN, YOU'VE GOT A GORILLA AND SOME TOY-LOOKIN' THING HERE.
I SWEAR... DO WHAT-EVER YOU WANT.
FINE. THEN LET ME STAY HERE TO BE WITH YOU. THAT'LL BE ENOUGH FOR ME.
THAT THING PRACTICALLY KILLED SOMEONE I WORK WITH! A GORILLA'S JUST A GORILLA, MAN!
YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR OWN SCHTICK.
ON ONE CONDITION.
YOU MEAN I CAN COME HERE?
IT'S A COMEDY TERM. IT MEANS YOUR GIMMICK, YOUR THEME. YOU AND I ARE WAY TOO SIMILAR—IF WE'RE TOGETHER, THE EFFECT LOSES STRENGTH. WE DON'T STAND OUT AS MUCH.
I don't get it.
WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?
MY OWN... SCHTICK?

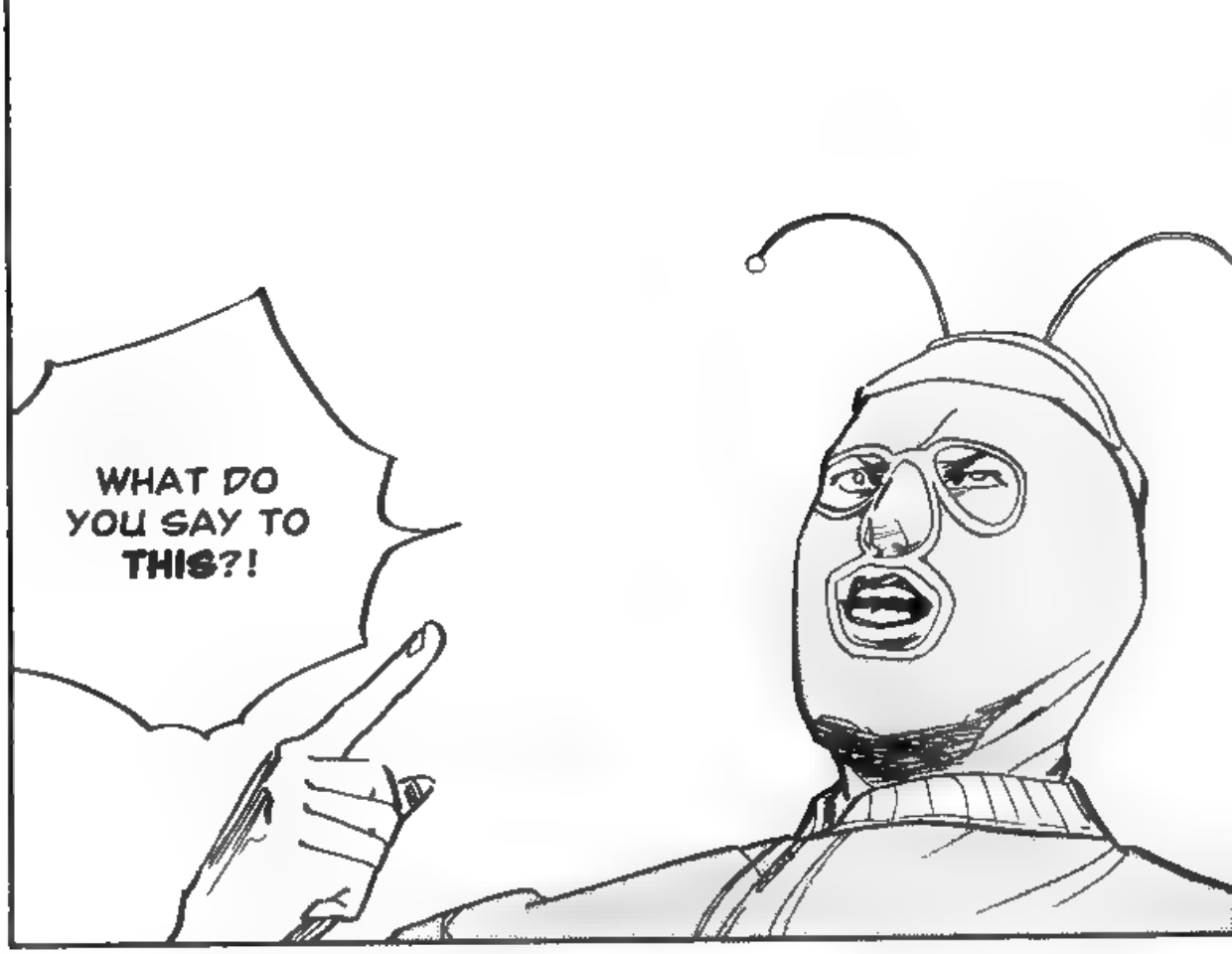
THAT WOULD BE BEST. THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING. NOTHING'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN COOPERATION, YOU KNOW.
FINE, I'LL TAKE IT OFF.
I FOLLOW YOU. WE BOTH WEAR MASKS, SO TO EVERYONE ELSE, WE LOOK PRETTY MUCH THE SAME.
. . . . . .
I'VE ALREADY DONE THAT. ACTUALLY, I JUST FORGOT TO PUT IT ON ONE DAY... ANYWAY, YOU'RE PUTTING TOO MUCH THOUGHT INTO THIS. IT'D BE BETTER TO JUST TAKE IT OFF INSTEAD OF TRYING TO PULL SOME KIND OF STUNT WITH IT.
HANG ON. I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING. WOULDN'T IT HAVE MORE IMPACT IF I WEAR THE MASK FOR A WHILE AND THEN TAKE IT OFF IN FRONT OF EVERYONE?
LET ME BE PERFECTLY CLEAR-- I COULDN'T CARE LESS WHETHER YOU WEAR THAT THING OR NOT. IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KEEP IT ON, FINE. KEEP IT ON!
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?! WHY WOULD I GO AND PULL SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!
YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME THIS SO YOU CAN PUSH ME OUT OF THE PICTURE, ARE YOU?
HMM. AN ECCEN-TRIC COSTUME, HUH?
ANYWAY, WHY DON'T YOU START OUT WITH AN ECCENTRIC COSTUME?
YEAH, FINE.
BUT IF YOU DO, REMEMBER THAT I WAS THE ONE WHO WORE A MASK FIRST. THAT MEANS YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A PALE IMITATION, NOTHING MORE.


YES, I KNOW. I DON'T NEED YOU TO TELL ME THIS STUFF.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I'LL SAY THIS RIGHT NOW--IF YOU'RE THINKING OF SHOWING UP TO SCHOOL IN A GORILLA OUTFIT, DON'T! THERE'S NO WAY YOU'LL UPSTAGE A REAL GORILLA.
HUH?
HEY! YOU LOOKED OVER AT THE GORILLA JUST NOW, DIDN'T YOU?!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! THIS IS A NORMAL HIGH SCHOOL, RIGHT?
I CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY TIMES SOMEONE HAS SHOWN UP JUST ONCE, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN, BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION.
AS I'M SURE YOU'VE NOTICED, THIS SCHOOL IS A GOLD MINE OF SCHTICK. IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING THAT SETS YOU APART FROM THE CROWD, YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT.
ARE YOU SERIOUS? THEY SAID THAT ABOUT YOU?!
I'VE BEEN AROUND FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, BUT SOME PEOPLE WERE PREDICTING MY SECOND APPEARANCE WOULD BE MY LAST.
I'M SAYING THAT EVEN ALIENS FROM OUTER SPACE HAVE VANISHED AFTER ONLY TWO APPEARANCES. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO'VE DISAPPEARED AFTER SHOWING UP JUST ONCE IS IN THE DOZENS.
FOR ME TO STICK IT OUT SO LONG IN A SCHOOL WITH THIS MUCH SCHTICK HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS PRESSURE. DO YOU SEE WHERE I'M COMING FROM NOW?
WELL, EVEN PEOPLE TALKING BAD ABOUT YOU IS PROOF YOU'RE BEING NOTICED. HOWEVER YOU GET YOUR ATTENTION, IT'S BETTER THAN BEING FORGOTTEN AND JUST DISAPPEARING.

WHAT?! BUT THAT'S WHAT GOT YOU NOTICED, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S RIGHT. AND I'LL TELL YOU, I'VE SORT OF STARTED TO REGRET WEARING THIS MASK.
IS THAT HOW IT WAS? YOU'VE REALLY BEEN THROUGH A LOT, HAVEN'T YOU?
YEAH, THAT MAKES SENSE. THE MASK IS SUCH A POWERFUL WEAPON THAT IT CAN ACTUALLY WORK AGAINST YOU, DRAGGIN' YOU DOWN AND MAKIN' THINGS MORE DIFFICULT.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT...BUT NOW I KNOW IT WAS A MISTAKE. TO USE A BASEBALL ANALOGY, IT'S LIKE THE PITCHER THROWING OUT HIS WINNING SHOT ON THE VERY FIRST PITCH. YOU CAN'T KEEP IT GOING FOREVER.
YOU NEED TO WATCH YOUR STEP. PEOPLE HAVEN'T COME TO ASSOCIATE YOU WITH THE MASK YET, SO NOW'S THE TIME TO CHANGE THINGS UP. HERE, NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW YOU START OFF. CONSIDER THIS A WORD OF ADVICE FROM YOUR SENIOR.
I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND. I SORT OF WONDER WHY YOU DON'T JUST TAKE IT OFF, BUT I GET IT.
EXACTLY. IF YOU'RE WEARING A MASK RIGHT WHEN YOU SHOW UP, THEN NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO AFTER THAT, IT'S NOT GOING TO PACK THE SAME PUNCH. IT'S LIKE THE MASK ECLIPSES YOU.
MAKING IT IN LIFE IS SCARY NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE, BUT YOU CAN'T GIVE UP. YOU HAVE TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD. THE MINUTE YOU STOP MOVING IS THE MINUTE YOU START GETTING OLD.
I...I'M STARTIN' TO LOSE CONFI-DENCE, BRO!
I GET IT. SO YOUR DIRECTION IS BASICALLY SET FROM YOUR FIRST APPEARANCE. MAN, THIS PLACE IS KINDA SCARY.
ONCE YOUR SCHTICK HAS BEEN SET, IT'S GONNA BE HARD TO CHANGE IT. YOU SHOULD KEEP THAT IN MIND.

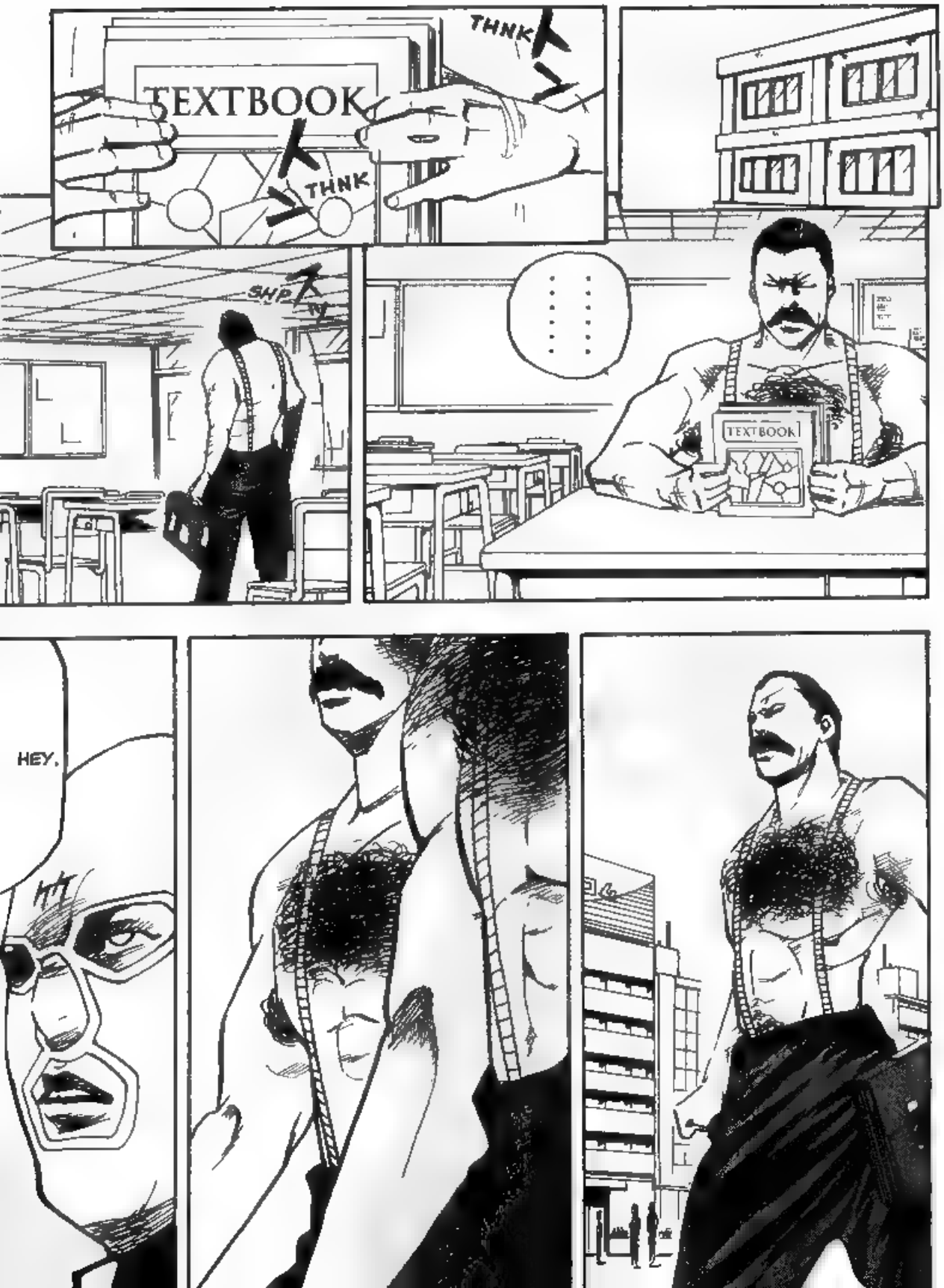
THAT'S RIGHT. PRETTY DIFFICULT, ISN'T IT? STILL, THE STRANGE THING IS, BEING A LITTLE PLAIN ISN'T ALWAYS BAD.
I'VE GOTTA FIND SOMETHIN' THAT STANDS OUT! IF I FALL BEHIND, IT'S ALL OVER FOR ME!
THERE'S A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT ANGLES TO CONSIDER, HUH? THANKS, I'VE LEARNED A LOT.
TAKE THAT GUY OVER THERE. THERE'S NOTHING TOO APPEALING ABOUT HIM, AND HE CERTAINLY DOESN'T HAVE MUCH **PRESENCE**... BUT HE HAS NO NAME. THAT RATHER INTERESTING WRINKLE HAS ALLOWED HIM TO STICK AROUND FOR A LOT LONGER THAN YOU'D THINK. NORMALLY, SOMEONE LIKE THAT WOULDN'T LAST FIVE SECONDS AROUND HERE!
WHY DO YOU KEEP GOING AFTER OTHER PEOPLE'S SCHTICKS?! YOU'VE GOT TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING ORIGINAL!
DO YOU THINK I SHOULD HAVE NO NAME, TOO?
LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING...
YES, IT WILL BE HARD AT FIRST, BUT IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT COMING TO THIS SCHOOL, YOU NEED TO JUST DO IT AND DON'T LET IT GET TO YOU.
IT'LL TAKE A LOT OF WORK, BUT YOU NEED TO GRIT YOUR TEETH AND TRY THINKING OF SOMETHING NEW! SOMETHING THAT HASN'T BEEN DONE BEFORE!

HMM. AN ORIGINAL SCHTICK, HUH?
IT HAS TO BE ORIGINAL, RIGHT? SOMETHING NO ONE'S THOUGHT OF YET.
NO, I-I'LL DO IT! DON'T GIVE UP ON ME YET!
I SUPPOSE IT'S TOO MUCH FOR YOU...
THE NEXT DAY
OH? I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING IT.
I'VE GOT IT! I'LL COME UP WITH SOMETHING THAT'LL OUTDO EVERYONE! IT'S EVEN GOING TO OUTDO YOU!
HM?
I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING NEW! LOOK!
HA! I DID IT!



SAY GOODBYE, MASKED MAN NO. 2.

CHAPTER 204: **JEALOUSY**



HM?
WHAT DID I SAY?! I SAID YOU CAN'T JUST COPY SOMEONE ELSE!

AREN'T YOU EMBARRASSED AT WHAT'S COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH? OR DO YOU HONESTLY NOT THINK YOU'RE SWIPING IDEAS?
YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO SAY THAT WHILE STANDING THERE AND LOOKING LIKE THAT?
I'M NOT REALLY TRYIN' TO COPY ANYONE...

IN YOUR CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, YOU MIGHT THINK YOU'RE JUST USING SOMETHING YOU'VE SEEN, WHICH THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH.
SOME PEOPLE WHO COPY OTHERS MAY NOT SEE THAT THEY'RE RIPPING PEOPLE OFF.
TRUE. EVEN IF I SAID TO TRY TO IGNORE HIM, HE PACKS A PRETTY BIG PUNCH, VISUALLY SPEAKING.
OF COURSE, I'VE SEEN THIS GUY A COUPLE TIMES, SO I PROBABLY HAD AN UNCONSCIOUS IMAGE OF HIM OR SOMETHING.
YOU'VE PRETTY MUCH NAILED IT. I DON'T FEEL BAD...I NEVER CONSCIOUSLY SET OUT TO COPY ANYBODY.
N-NO, THAT'S ALRIGHT. I THINK I'VE FIGURED IT OUT.
DID YOU WANNA TAKE A LOOK?
I DID COME UP WITH ONE OTHER NEW IDEA. I GUESS NO MATTER WHAT I SAY, IT WON'T BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT...
IF YOU GO TO SCHOOL NOW, YOU'LL JUST KEEP COPYING WHOEVER YOU SEE AROUND YOU.
Actually, you haven't even come to school ONCE.
HUH?!
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE TWO OR THREE DAYS OFF AND THINK OF SOMETHING?

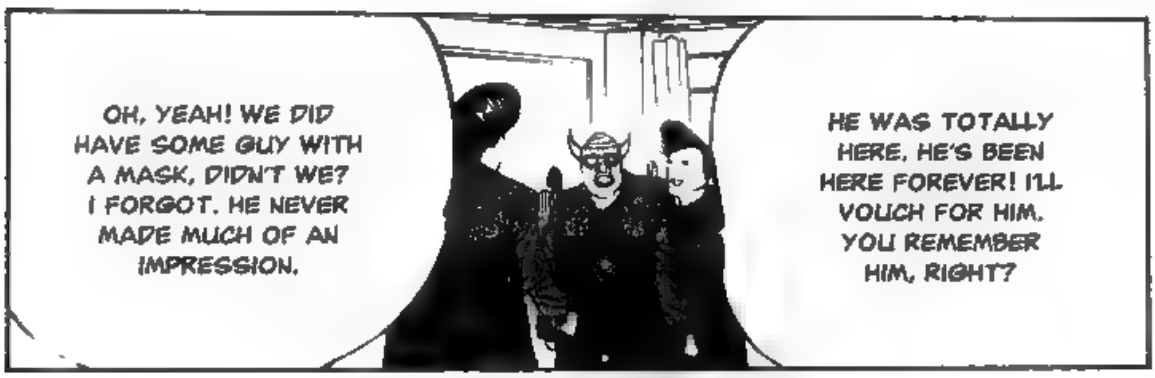
I HATE TO PUT IT THIS WAY, BUT...
OK, FINE. I'LL TAKE SOME TIME OFF AND JUST COOL DOWN FOR A BIT.
WHY DON'T YOU CLEAR YOUR HEAD AND NOT LOOK AT ANYTHING FOR A WHILE? THAT MIGHT GET SOMETHING ORIGINAL TO POP INTO YOUR HEAD.
I'M SORRY, BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. THE PROBLEM HERE IS A MATTER OF SENSE. YOU'RE COPYING OTHERS BECAUSE YOU CAN'T COME UP WITH SOMETHING ORIGINAL.
WHAT?! NO!
THIS NEXT TIME...
COULD BE YOUR LAST.
WE'VE HAD A LOT OF PEOPLE WHOSE SCHTICKS WERE PRETTY WEAK, BUT WE'VE NEVER HAD ANYONE WHO COPIED SOMEBODY ELSE. THAT'S HOW BIG OF A TABOO IT IS.
THE NEXT DAY
JUST GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT.
I-I'M SORRY, BRO. IS IT TOO LATE FOR ME ALREADY?
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T.

HM?
LOOK!
I GUESS HE COULDN'T DO IT. POOR GUY...BUT THAT'S HOW IT IS IN THE REAL WORLD.
I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM IN A WHILE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
LOOK AT WHAT I THOUGHT UP!
TRUE, IT'S ORIGINAL, BUT "ORIGINAL" DOESN'T MEAN THAT JUST ANYTHING IS OK.
NO, SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO LAUGH. IT'S JUST SO RIDICULOUS.
WHAT'S WITH THAT LAUGH?! ARE YOU MAKIN' FUN OF ME?
HEH HEH
YOU CAN'T EXPECT PEOPLE HERE TO ACCEPT YOU WITH A SIMPLE IDEA LIKE THAT. THIS SCHOOL'S A LOT MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN THAT.
THIS IS SOMETHING A GRADE SCHOOL KID WOULD THINK OF.

THAT CRACKS ME UP!
BWA HA HA
IT'S GREAT!
HA HA HA
NO, I'M JUST A NEWB.
YOU'RE A FUNNY GUY! HAH!
TH-THEY'VE TOTALLY ACCEPTED HIM!

WHO CARES? LOOK HOW FUNNY HE IS!
HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN A STUDENT HERE?

WAIT A MIN-UTE.


OH, YEAH! WE DID HAVE SOME GUY WITH A MASK, DIDN'T WE? I FORGOT. HE NEVER MADE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION.
HE WAS TOTALLY HERE. HE'S BEEN HERE FOREVER! I'LL VOUCH FOR HIM. YOU REMEMBER HIM, RIGHT?

HE COULD END UP BEING MORE POPULAR THAN ME.

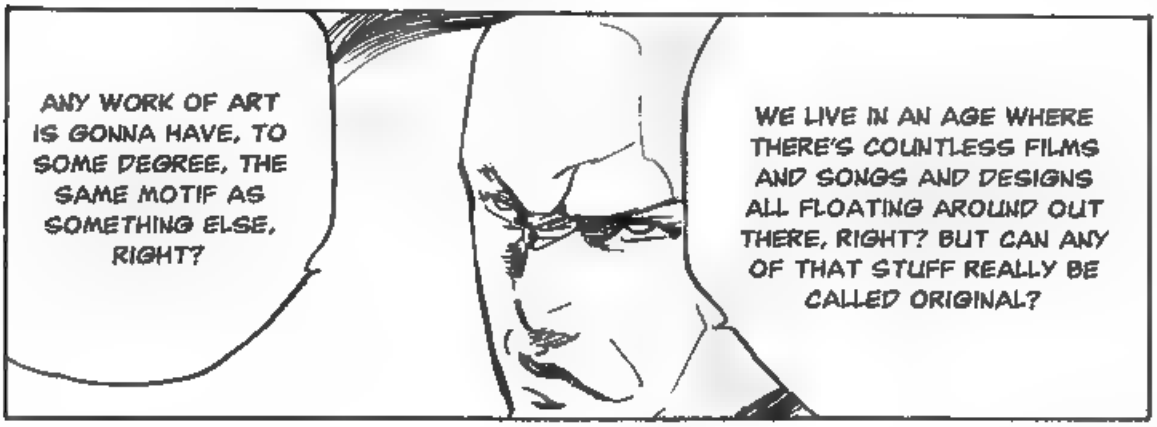
THIS IS NOT GOOD.

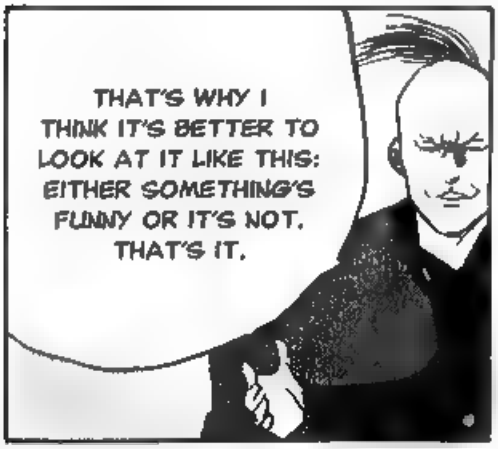
HUH?
THAT GUY OVER THERE IS THE ORIGINAL MASKED MAN. I'M JUST MASK NO. 2.
NO, THAT WASN'T ME. I'VE ONLY JUST TRANSFERRED HERE.
OH, NO! I'VE BEEN COMPLETELY LEFT OUT!
YEAH, PICK UP WHERE YOU LEFT OFF!
AAH, WHO CARES? C'MON, TELL US A FUNNY STORY, MASK NO. 2!
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS HIS SCHTICK GETTING MORE AND MORE INTERESTING?

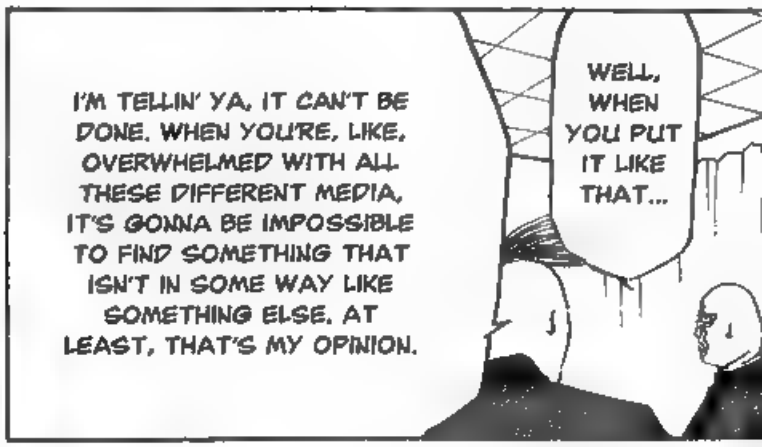
CROWDS ARE MINDLESS BY NATURE--THEY'LL EAT UP ANYTHING, NO MATTER HOW BORING IT IS!
NO, GET A GRIP! DON'T LET YOURSELF BE FOOLED!
Mask No. 2's bag
STILL, HE DID A PRETTY GOOD JOB, CONSIDERING. IN JUST A FEW DAYS, HE WAS ABLE TO COME UP WITH A PRETTY GOOD SCHTICK.
MANGA
MANGA
AH-HA! I KNEW THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD COME UP WITH SOMETHING ORIGINAL. STILL, TO RIP OFF A MANGA THAT ONLY THE STUDENTS OF THIS SCHOOL WOULD NEVER GET TIRED OF IS SINKING PRETTY LOW!
BYE BYE VIKING
RAAARGH!
HE...HE RIPPED OFF A MANGA!

HUH?
HEY, EVERYONE! HAVE A LOOK AT THIS MANGA!
IN ANY CASE, NOW THAT I'VE LEARNED THIS, HE'S MINE! I'M GOING TO EXPOSE HIM FOR WHAT HE REALLY IS.
THAT MASK NO. 2 OR WHATEVER IS JUST RIPPING OFF A CHARACTER FROM THIS MANGA! WHAT A SORRY SON OF A BITCH! HA HA HA!
MANGA
OH, HAYASHIDA! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE. LISTEN, THAT MASK NO. 2 GUY IS STEALING IDEAS FROM THIS MANGA! IF HE'S NOT CAREFUL, THIS COULD TURN INTO A CASE OF COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT!
WHAT ARE YOU SUD-DENLY GOIN' ON ABOUT?
HUH? "SO WHAT?" SO HE'S STEALING SOMEONE ELSE'S IDEA! YOU THINK THAT'S FINE?
SO WHAT?
LOOK, MASK...
OH, YOU DO? SO WHY AREN'T YOU GETTING WORKED UP ABOUT IT? I MEAN, THE GUY'S RIPPING OFF A MANGA AND FLAUNTING IT IN FRONT OF EVERYONE!
I KNOW ALL THIS ALREADY. I OWN THAT MANGA.

LOOK, I'M NOT TRYIN' TO GET ON YOUR CASE OR ANYTHING.
I-I AM? I'M RIPPING OFF THE DE-STROYER?
Who the heck is that?!
IF YOU'RE GONNA START TALKIN' ABOUT PEOPLE RIPPING PEOPLE OFF, WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU'RE RIPPING OFF THE DESTROYER?

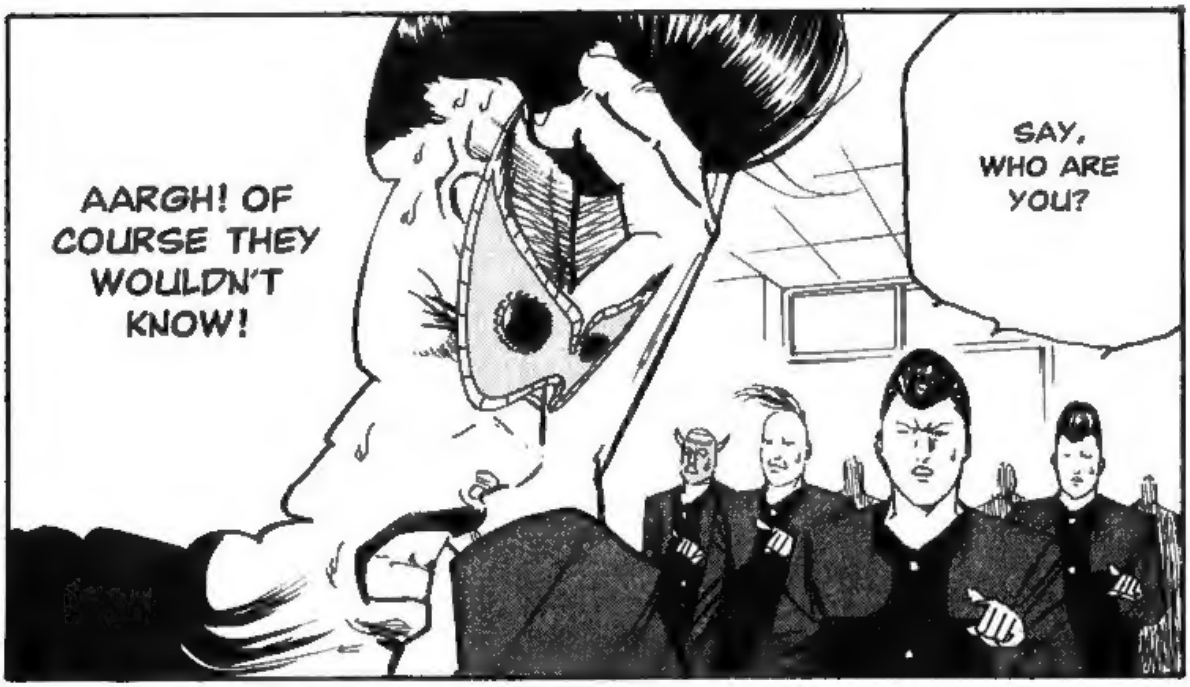

ANY WORK OF ART IS GONNA HAVE, TO SOME DEGREE, THE SAME MOTIF AS SOMETHING ELSE, RIGHT?
WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHERE THERE'S COUNTLESS FILMS AND SONGS AND DESIGNS ALL FLOATING AROUND OUT THERE, RIGHT? BUT CAN ANY OF THAT STUFF REALLY BE CALLED ORIGINAL?


THAT'S WHY I THINK IT'S BETTER TO LOOK AT IT LIKE THIS: EITHER SOMETHING'S FUNNY OR IT'S NOT. THAT'S IT.


I'M TELLIN' YA, IT CAN'T BE DONE. WHEN YOU'RE, LIKE, OVERWHELMED WITH ALL THESE DIFFERENT MEDIA, IT'S GONNA BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND SOMETHING THAT ISN'T IN SOME WAY LIKE SOMETHING ELSE. AT LEAST, THAT'S MY OPINION.
WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT...

. . . . . .
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT WE'RE PRETTY MUCH BORED WITH YOU.
PUT ANOTHER WAY...
YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT'S A VERY MATURE OPINION YOU HAVE THERE.

IF I'M NOT CARE-FUL...
.....
.....
SORRY, I WENT TOO FAR. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, ALRIGHT?
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I COULD BRUSH THIS OFF...
THINKING EVERYTHING WOULD BE FINE SO LONG AS I HAD MY MASK.
THE ONE WHO GETS THE AXE NEXT TIME HE SHOWS UP...
BUT TIMES CHANGE. I'VE BEEN SO BUSY WITH MY JOB THAT I HADN'T NOTICED. WHAT A FOOL.
WILL BE ME.
HM?
I SEE EVERYONE'S HERE.
THE NEXT DAY
THE FIRST THING TO DO IS TO SHOW UP TOMORROW WITH A NEW SCHTICK. HMPH! THAT BASTARD. I'LL SHOW HIM A THING OR TWO. HE'LL SEE!



AT LEAST MASK NO. 2 SHOULD KNOW.

THE GORILLA WENT TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?!

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL VOLUME NINE

© 2004 Eiji Nonaka
All rights reserved.
First published in Japan in 2004 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo
English translation rights for this edition arranged through Kodansha Ltd.

Translator/Editor **JAVIER LOPEZ**
Graphic Artist **SCOTT HOWARD**
Copy Editor **SHERIDAN SCOTT**

Editorial Director **GARY STEINMAN**
Print Production Manager **BRIDGETT JANOTA**
Production Coordinator **MARISA KREITZ**

International Coordinators **TORU IWAKAMI AND MIYUKI KAMIYA**

President, CEO & Publisher **JOHN LEDFORD**

Email: editor@adv-manga.com
www.adv-manga.com
www.advfilms.com

For sales and distribution inquiries please call 1.800.282.7202

is a division of A.D. Vision, Inc.
5750 Bintliff Drive, Suite 210, Houston, Texas 77036

English text © 2007 published by A.D. Vision, Inc. under exclusive license.
ADV MANGA is a trademark of A.D. Vision, Inc.

All Rights Reserved. This is a fictional work. Any resemblance to actual events or locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. Reproduction and, or transmission of this work in whole or in part without written permission of the copyright holders is unlawful.

ISBN: 978-1-4139-0357-7
First printing, January 2007
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in Canada